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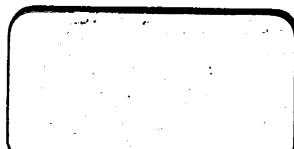
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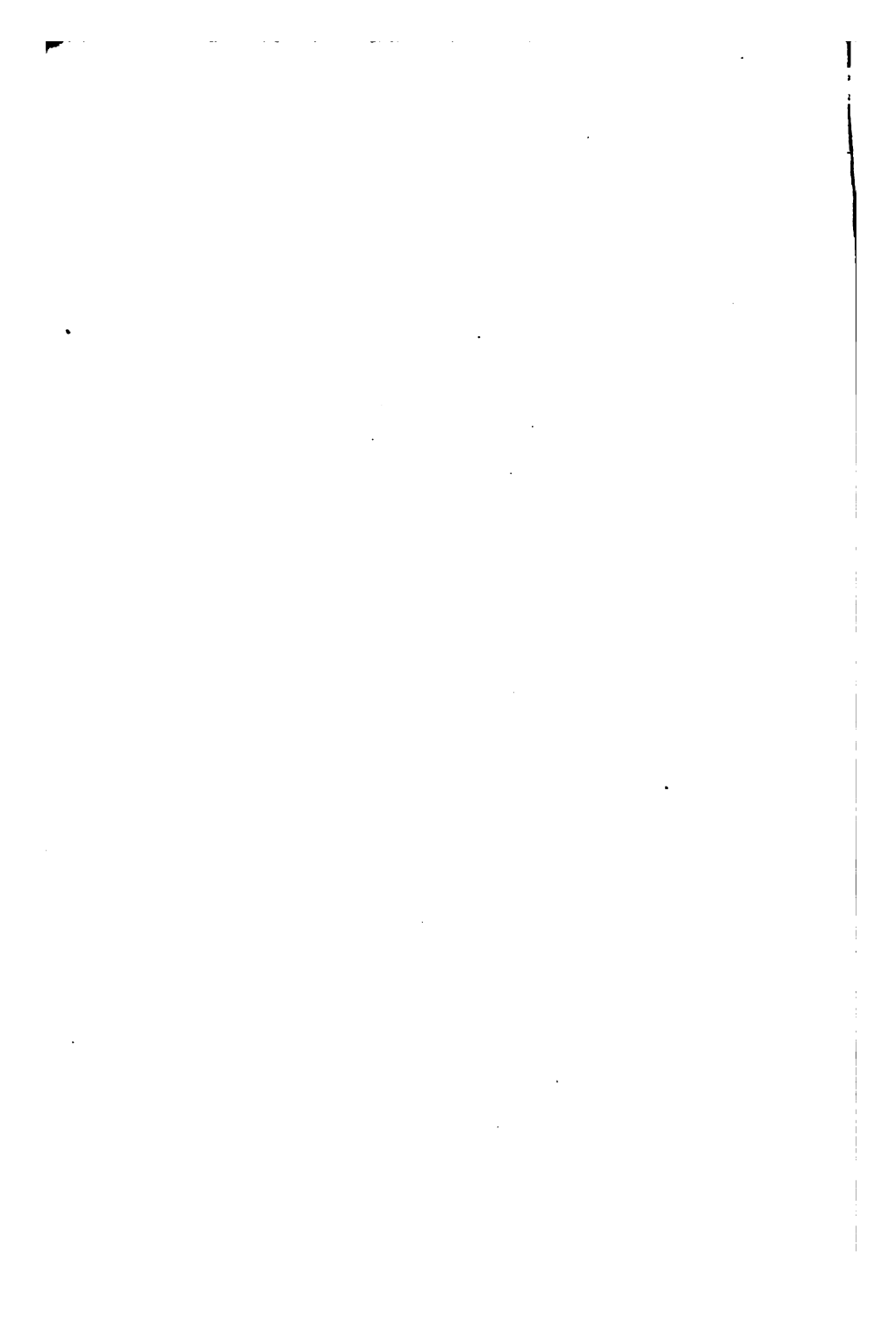
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FRANK AMOR.



FRANK AMOR:

A Novel.

BY

JAJABEE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III

Love hath no wherefore."



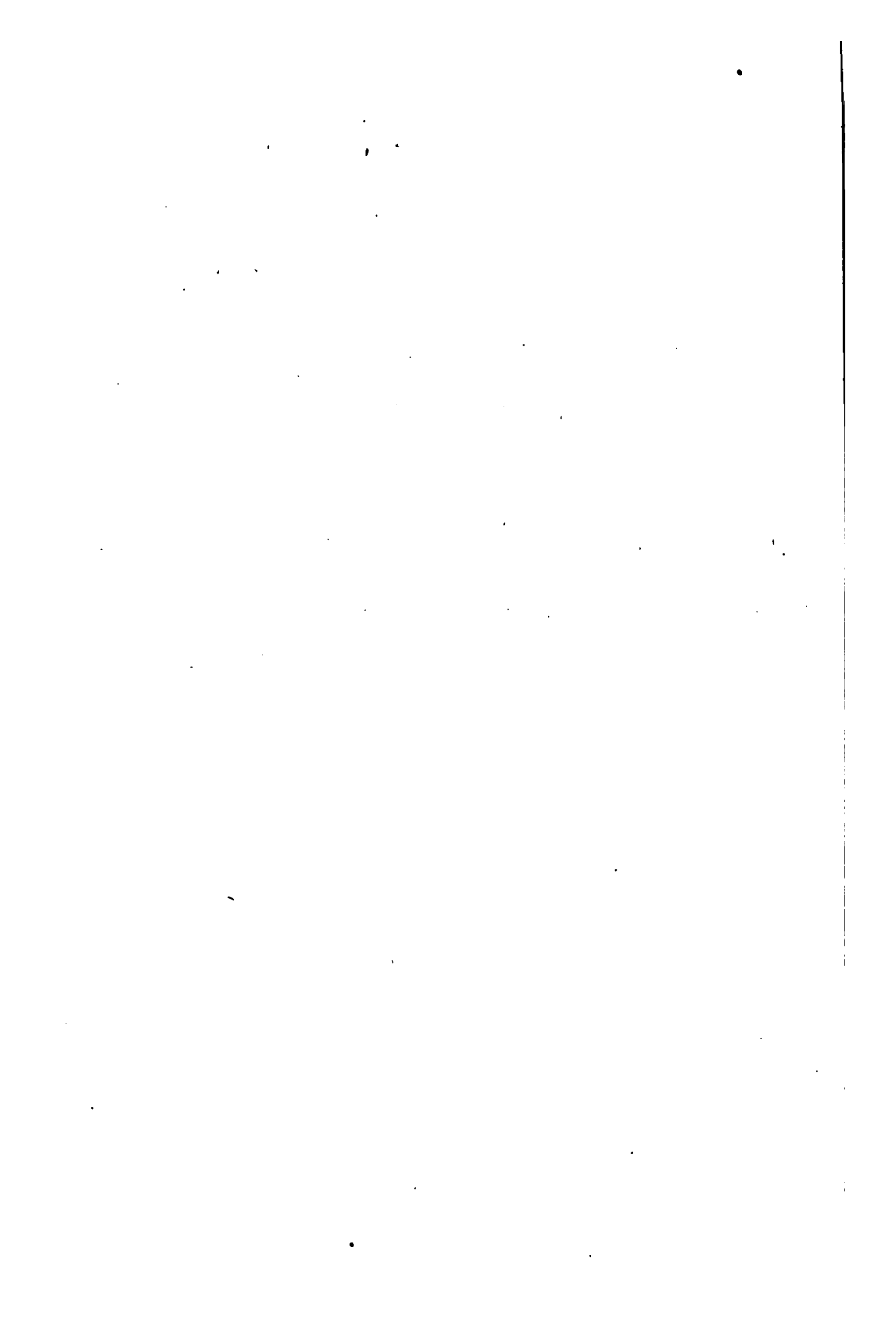
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FRANK AMOR.

CHAPTER I.

It was in some degree amusing to me to watch the play of Spinner's expression while he was being informed of the service expected of him. I could see he was able gradually to comprehend why he had been selected as a chief agent in the Captain's deliverance, though he did not state what he knew of that matter. He nodded his head several times, with his eyes half closed, in the course of the young actress's address, and a cynical smile lurked at the corners of his mouth when she told him that the Captain himself had prompted the choice of him as advocate.

"And now about your marriage," said he, abruptly, when the maiden had finished the recital of the business she desired to be done by him, "is it still *sur le tapis*?"

"It is certain," she replied, with returning

hauteur, "quite certain—if I choose to will it so. But," added she, resentfully, "that is a matter with which you have no concern, and I shall certainly decline to discuss it with you."

"Oho!" uttered the observant little Frenchwoman to herself, "he is Johnny ze bull."

He gazed, with calm eyes, at the blushing, indignant beauty, and presently, with polite air, answered,—

"I am not one in the least likely to forget the respect due to you."

"C'est mieux!" uttered the mamma, well pleased at the honour given to the girl.

The maiden smiled to herself when Spinner testified his homage to her, and, with arbitrary air, bade him tell his reasons for introducing the subject of her forthcoming marriage.

"To save you for a worthier man," he returned, quietly.

"How dare you speak so to my face!" furiously exclaimed the fair one, stamping her foot upon the floor in the vehemence of her sudden anger.

She advanced up to her offender, and repeated her shrewish words so close to his face that he must have felt her breath hot upon his cheek.

Spinner looked admiringly on the infuriated

girl, and tried to obtain her ear for his polite explanation; but his conciliatory attempts had only the effect of increasing her excitement to an hysterical pitch, when she broke down into a fit of passionate sobbing.

The mother, uttering a malediction upon the head of the wicked man who had wrung the heart of her dear girl, hastened to offer such potent comfort to the distressed fair one as only one woman can give to another; and then the sorrowing maiden, growing for the moment more deeply afflicted, impulsively threw herself down upon a chair. She remained for some few minutes with her face buried in her hands, and then, as though a new and startling comprehension had unexpectedly entered her mind, she rose, and, directing her gaze suspiciously at Spinner, and then at me, cried out that she could now understand why Spinner had dared to speak to her as he had done.

"You have planned it together beforehand," cried the fair discoverer of a mare's nest. "A pretty plot it is too, to be sure!"

"Zey plan zat togeser!" exclaimed the little Frenchwoman, clenching her fists and gesticulating violently in her indignation, "zen zey not stay here for longer time."

I stood up and denied the existence of any plot of the kind; yet, at the same time, I could not but think that it was a pity that the imputed conspiracy was a thing only of suspicion. The angry fair one had charged Spinner and me with the intention of carrying out a little plot against her, framed after the fashion of that which she had herself planned against us, and so I was vexed to think that the plot as imagined was baseless to an utter degree.

"I am certainly innocent of the charge you now prefer against me," said Spinner, with a twinkle of amusement in his eyes; "and, to confess the truth, I have not *nous* enough to conceive for myself such a master-plot as the one you have imagined for me. Machiavelli himself, I verily believe, never conceived a prettier piece of cunning."

I observed that, on concluding his remark, he glanced aside at me, and I instantly understood the action to be an intentional one of unfriendly character. Seeing him thus demonstrative in his ill-will, I determined to bring about some definite understanding between us at this opportunity.

My feelings were presently enamoured to behold the young actress as she stood gazing

in silence upon Spinner, with the azure depths of her eyes kindled in wavering mistrust, while her proud lips rested apart, and her bosom rose and fell in quick action under the suspense of the moment. She seemed to be wondering what manner of man this was whom she had called here at her unfortunate uncle's suggestion. She looked long at him, searching as it were into his very soul. Her scrutiny was favourable to him, for suddenly she relaxed the severity of her expression, and put forth her hand, saying,—

“I believe you. Forgive me.”

“Also believe me,” said he, touching the fair hand with his lips, “to be honest in my advice to you.”

“Pray, sir,” quickly returned the maiden, with a motion of impatience, “let us speak only upon my uncle's business. My own I can myself arrange without your advice.”

“Look you, young lady,” continued Spinner, with strange earnestness, advancing in turn close to the excited girl, and evidently awing her to some extent by his bold manner, “listen.” He then imparted to her the startling intelligence that a particular man was waiting outside, who could enlighten her mind to some purpose.

"About my uncle?" she inquired.

"No, not about your uncle," he returned, deliberately, "but about your intended husband."

"Sir!" she ejaculated, sweeping her dress, with a quick, involuntary motion, back from contact with the man who was asserting over her such high-handed authority. This lovely being, like Cleopatra, had been so long accustomed to receive a ready homage from all manner of men, that now for her to encounter this Cæsar, who would not submit to her splendid influence, but instead played off his own subjecting power, roused within her a fearful wonder, and she seemed to be apprehensive that she had met at this time a man of very uncommon kind. She stood with her head thrown proudly back, and with tightly clenched hands held straight downward; while, by reason of her dress being drawn aside, the symmetrical outline of her limbs was revealed, making her appear a living counterpart of Jove's fair cup-bearer. "Sir, you are insolent!" said the young beauty, again breaking the silence. Her eyes gleamed, evidently with the moving consciousness that this supreme moment must decide whether her exquisite power was potent to humiliate this daring man.

I could scarcely realize that Spinner was a being of ordinary flesh and blood to see him looking now with calm admiration at the living embodiment before him of that combination of power which has accomplished the ruin of the world.

"For your own sake," said he, with voice of stern authority, tempered by politeness, "I entreat you to let the man come in."

"What are you to me?" exclaimed the girl, passionately, "that you dare take such a liberty."

"I am nothing in particular to you," he replied, with perfect nonchalance. "I am advising you now just as I would advise any other of your sex affected by similar circumstances, if the opportunity came in my way."

"You speke for your freynt," said the little Frenchwoman, in her curious jargon. Then she wound her arm about the waist of the excited girl, to take her away from the scene of her humiliation; but the disconcerted fair one would not consent to go.

Spinner shook his head, and smiled to himself in a very meaning manner, on being accused of fighting his battle on my behalf.

"Oh, you mean coward!" cried the incensed maiden through her clenched teeth, addressing

me; and now her eyes positively glistened with excess of passion, and her delicate nostrils dilated almost to distortion. Without giving me time to answer, she transferred her attention to Spinner, declaring it her opinion that he was surely lacking in common manly courage that he had not dared to carry his present defamatory insinuation to the man at whom it was directed, but had come there instead to deliver it, with the thought, no doubt, that he would meet two defenceless women only.

Spinner stood bolt upright, staring indignantly at the inflamed fair one, who was hissing unrestrained vituperation at him; and, though he spake not a word of protest at her insults, his deep mortification was evident from the angry gloom which now pervaded his features.

“Go away, you!” cried the mother, looking round at Spinner, and pointing nervously at the door. She had taken hold of her daughter, and was endeavouring to compose her. “Go away,” she added, with angry emphasis, “and come back not again.”

Spinner thereupon quietly bowed, and turned to take his departure, when the impassioned young actress broke away from her mother’s

arms, and, bounding with the graceful agility of an antelope across the floor, placed herself in front of him.

"What now?" he said, abruptly, with his brows contracted.

The excited girl, standing now as she did with her arms partly extended, her animated features deeply flushed, and her golden ringlets all in disorder, was certainly a sight to move the heart of a very Saint Anthony. "You shall not go," she exclaimed, with voice curiously expressive of mingled command and appeal, "until you have told me your story."

"It would be useless for me to tell my story," he returned, firmly, "in the absence of the man now waiting outside."

"Very well," she cried, petulantly, "let him come in."

Spinner went instantly to fetch the individual who was accredited with the possession of a secret which was potent to affect my uncle's wicked household, as the great shout, led by Joshua, affected the walls of ungodly Jericho.

Eve turned now to me with a severe look—wickedly glad, I believe, to have one of unre-sisting disposition on whom to pour her angry

discontent—and reproached me in most unjust and unmerciful terms.

“*Mon Dieu!*” cried the little Frenchwoman, with sudden surprise, looking out of the window. “*Il apporte le diable soi-même!*”

My accuser, on hearing this exclamation of her mother’s, ceased her attentions to me, and stood waiting in almost breathless suspense for the entrance of her hated visitors. Presently the door was pushed slowly back, and on the threshold appeared the handsome, dusky figure of Chund, making a salaam in his peculiar treacherous, calm manner.

Spinner stood in the shade at the back of his man, and his voice pealed upon the silence which, like the lull before a storm, prevailed amongst us at this moment.

“Behold the most damnable villain, save one, in the whole state!”

The young actress had evidently recognized the Indian, and, on hearing the words accompanying his appearance, her face assumed a look of painful apprehension, and she drew back a few steps, with an involuntary gasp of terror.

“Oho!” exclaimed the Frenchwoman, with contemptuous accents. “And me hear ze ozer one.”

This taunt proved effective to bring Spinner immediately to the front, when he faced the sharp-witted little woman with apparent intention of resenting her gibe; but he contented himself with addressing merely a scornful gesture towards her, and then gave his attention again to the young actress.

Pointing at arm's length to the calm-seeming devil who stood at the doorway, he stated that he was able to prove that this brown man-creature had been concerned in the infernal mutiny of the Sepoys, and that he had another villain like this in reserve.

"But, sir," gasped the terrified maiden, "what is all that to me?"

"Everything!" replied Spinner, with sharp decisive voice, bestowing upon the shrinking girl a look such as might have appeared on the face of the stern Knox when reproving the self-seeking, beauteous Queen of Scots, "everything! For the fact is, that this man, with his absent fellow, enacted their villainous deeds with the full approval of your intended husband."

A spasmodic shriek of terror escaped the blanched lips of the maiden as Spinner uttered his grave charge against her rich wooer, and she staggered against the wall, and seemed

about to faint; whereupon her mother rushed out of the room to procure some water.

Spinner now roughly dragged the Indian into the room, and thrust him into the corner nearest the door.

“Sharp remedies,” murmured he, observing the beautiful, panting form of the stricken one, “are needed for desperate cases.”

The mother presently reappeared with the desired restorative, when I observed a strange, wicked light in her eyes, while her lips were sealed in an ominous silence.

She went straight up to her daughter, and sprinkled some water upon her head and face, also giving her some to drink. Then she walked over to Spinner, and, pointing with quivering arm towards the door, uttered, in her own language, the words, — “Allez-vous-en !”

“No,” exclaimed the girl, rousing herself with a sudden effort. “No, no !”

And she pulled her mother back, and stood in her place.

“Will you,” she proceeded, with changed, measured, cold accents, looking into her tormentor’s eyes anxiously, as though striving to read his mind, “will you repeat your story in the presence of Mr. Gall ?”

"Yes," returned Spinner, with a calm, determined air, "at once, if you wish it."

"I do wish it, and at once," said the fair one, vehemently, opening and contracting her hands in a highly nervous manner.

Then she turned to her mother, saying that she should retire to her own room to put on her walking-dress; and, on noting that the matron was about to vent her ill-temper in an act of scolding, pulled her almost by main force out of the room.

There was a sullen look of determination brooding, I remarked, in Spinner's fierce, dark eyes and closely set lips, betokening that he was fully prepared to carry his formidable mission into effect. Now, as I found that he did not volunteer to me a word of explanation as to his present strange course of action, I addressed him, asking that he should tell me how and where he had fallen in with the Indian Chund. He readily responded, explaining that he had, in relation to the evidence required for my defence in the late trial, set afoot inquiries to discover the missing Indian, and had early been surprised by a visit from the man himself, accompanied by another of his own race.

"That is all I shall tell you for the present,"

concluded he, curtly, moving away from me to look out of the window.

I was not contented with the meagre intelligence I had received, and I again addressed him, saying, I thought the men in reference were, in all probability, arrant liars as well as abominable knaves, and, therefore, to be considered only as very sorry implements to use in an honourable cause.

"If they ever speak the truth," returned Spinner, with dry intonation, without turning round, "it must, I should think, be only by a *lapsus linguæ*."

The thought now occurred to me that this strange man was seeking to accomplish his given purpose in a manner which might only be justified according to the expedient principle enunciated by the wily-souled Ignatius Loyola, and, in the warmth of my indignant feelings, I treated the matter in a personal sense, saying, I should certainly refuse to have my cause assisted by any means of unworthiness.

"Your cause!" he cried, with scorn, turning round suddenly, and scowling at me. "Why, my good fellow, my present matter goes a very long way beyond your particular cause. I am striving now, let me tell you, for the sake of justice and right in the abstract.

But, despite your uncomplimentary, stupid remark, I would now assure you that I propose to employ in my present enterprise no means of offence other than those fairly warrantable."

I knew enough of this man's character to justify me in contenting myself with the assurance he had given me, and now I asked him if he wished me to accompany him to the deciding field of action.

"No," he answered, rudely, turning again to the window.

The brown creature, posted against the wall, stood perfectly motionless, stealthily rolling his eyes; and as I looked at him, he caught my glance, and almost appalled me by the strange intelligence of his recognition.

My position at this moment, was a very painful one, having, on one side, the devilish Indian silently contemplating me with ghoul-like eyes, and, on the other, a strong-willed man, who grudged me my very life. Glad was I, therefore, when at length the Frenchwoman and her daughter re-entered the room.

"You will come with us, won't you?" said the maiden to me, gently touching my arm.

I felt anxious to go with her, and yet, remembering Spinner's discouraging answer to my question on the subject, and also dreading thus to meet my uncle, I was at a loss how to decide.

"But you *must* come," further remarked my divinity, observing my hesitation.

"Ah, oui," chimed in the little Frenchwoman. "You must come vit us."

I hesitated no longer, and testified my resolution to proceed with them to my uncle's house, when I noticed that Spinner smiled to himself, as though he considered my sudden resolution owing entirely to the arbitrary will of the young actress.

"He goes with us," said my tyrant to him.

"Better not, I think," he answered, with seeming careless objection.

"He *shall* go—that's decided," said the fair one, unmerciful to me, her truest friend, in the selfish desire to obtain a triumph over the man who had broken her long-sustained pride.

"It will be no great matter to me," remarked Spinner, with a short, meaning laugh. "But very likely he will himself regret it."

"Vat did your man do?" inquired the Frenchwoman, alluding to the Indian, and pointing at him with her straightened fore-

finger, as though it had been a pistol, and she stood to execute summary justice upon him.

"He served under the Napa Saheb," answered Spinner, with the tone of one who, having spoken, believes he has said much in very few words.

Chund's face now, for the first time, bore an ordinary human expression, for a faint smile broke over his naturally immobile features, while, with monotonous voice, he uttered the words,—*"Maharajah Screenath Bahadoor."*

I now remembered that my uncle had once informed me that the word "Nana" was employed by the natives of India as a term of familiarity, and not as a proper title, and I could thus understand why Chund had smiled when Spinner had used an affectionate term in reference to a Brahmin held in well-grounded abhorrence by all Europeans.

The young actress glanced with loathing at the handsome, brown human fiend who had rendered a tacit consent to the accusation charging him with having served under the orders of the infamous Bithoor murderer. Then she exclaimed, impulsively, that she believed that this hateful business was in truth only a dark conspiracy to ruin a perfectly honest gentleman. "Mr. Gall is, I believe,"

she concluded, speaking rapidly, "the last man in the world to have helped a monster like the Nana Saheb."

"He may not have helped immediately in the Cawnpore massacres," replied Spinner; "but I have clear evidence to prove that he was acting against his own people during the whole time of the mutiny."

It was harrowing to my feelings to reflect that my sole remaining uncle should be charged with the commission of conduct such as would prove him a villain of as rank a degree as any that have ever existed; for, considered I, with horror, if he were really guilty of conspiracy against his fellow-countrymen in India during the Sepoy mutiny, the blood of my murdered sister, and that of her brave husband, lay upon his hands. And then again, thought I, if that he were proved guilty of the dreadful charge now made against him, his disgrace would, to a certain extent, be shared in by myself, together with all his family relations.

The mere suspicion of such atrocious guilt as that now cast upon my uncle was enough of itself to stigmatize him for life. When I considered what was due to my honourable name, I determined to ascertain myself the truth of the accusation, in the event of my

uncle refusing the matter the attention which it plainly demanded.

I walked resolutely up to Spinner, and stated to him that I had carefully considered what was my duty in the present grave question, and that I had concluded to demand that the truth should be sifted out, let the cost be what it might.

"Yes," said he, musing; and, after a pause, he looked straight into my eyes, and frankly remarked,—“Well, I am now of opinion that your duty lies that way.”

My enchantress had evidently undervalued my silence while she was commanding me to accompany her to my uncle's house, for she had then exhibited a certain disrespect in her address towards me; but, after I had spoken determinedly to Spinner, she veered round in her regard of me, and treated me both kindly and courteously.

“You shall walk with my mother and me,” she whispered, graciously, into my ear, “and your friend shall follow behind with his precious witness.”

We then set out on our way to the house of the old man, who was charged with having raised his fortune from seeds of the basest iniquity; and Nemesis walked in our midst. I

walked between the two ladies, and derived a fine pleasure from the current of caloric conveyed into my yearning heart by reason of my arm pressing against the side of my divinity. A desponding silence was observed by me and my fair companion; but the mother maintained a ceaseless and voluble harangue in defamation of England and the English, which, to have been uttered in some American fish-market, would surely have gained for her a great reputation.

On reaching my uncle's house, it was arranged between us, though not with a friendly spirit, that the ladies and I should go in at once, and make known our business, and that Spinner, with the Indian, should wait outside until they might be summoned.

I observed that Chund was now affected with a feeling of mingled terror and rage, and I feared he would prove desperately distracted at the very moment when his offices would be in request.

My heart, I must confess, nearly failed me when I walked up the pathway, to gain admittance once more, and probably for the last time, into my uncle's house. I grew giddy, and walked like a man affected in drink, and when, shortly, I stood at the front door, I was

so far bewildered, that one of my companions considerably performed in my stead the office of knocking for admittance.

"Courage!" exclaimed the observant little Frenchwoman, and somehow her word of stimulation caused me to revive in strength.

The door was opened by the major-domo. He started back, uttering a guttural exclamation of surprise on beholding me here again, and would have warned his master, but that I was too quick for him, instantly interposing myself between him and the door of the library. I had secretly determined to face my uncle without a moment's delay, and so, pushing open the door of his room, I walked in, followed by my companions.

The familiar grey old figure sat in the wheeled chair, poring over some papers lying on the table beside the sentinel-like forms of strange birds and beasts. The scene now presented to my eyes caused a thrill of poignant feeling to affect me, for my mind was thereby vividly refreshed with recollections of the many painful events which had happened to me since I had last been there. My uncle, roused by the sounds attendant upon our intrusion, looked up resentfully, and muttered a few incoherent words of displeasure. He raised

his bent form slowly with his arms to a standing posture; when, recognizing me, he reeled on his legs, and only prevented himself from falling completely backward by a timely clutch of a stone god on the table.

The young actress, with natural feminine precipitation, at once bounded over to the terrified old man, and proposed to him in a breath the startling question, whether it was the truth that he had taken part in the massacre of Cawnpore.

"I?" he responded, apparently almost stunned in amazement. "No! oh no!"

"Hear that!" cried the impulsive girl, turning round to me with triumphant air, forgetful, in her keen excitement, that her question was one which could scarcely have been expected to bring about an assenting answer.

I paid no notice to the semi-hysterical remark of the fair one; but, conceiving that my only chance to discover the truth lay in a prompt, direct, and firm challenge, I stepped boldly up to my relative, and, first stating concisely the circumstances which had provoked my present visit to him, proceeded to demand that he should say, without the least prevarication, whether he had, or had not, favoured the Indian Sepoy Mutiny.

His face instantly turned deadly pale, and he gasped for very breath for some few seconds, and there was an expression of awful terror in his countenance, which, to my appreciation, was precisely what might be expected to appear upon the face of a deep-dyed villain who unexpectedly sees detection close at hand.

"I will not answer you," he said, on recovering his breath. Then he nervously waved his hand in the direction of the door, and bade me instantly quit his presence.

"Answer me this," said the maiden, impulsively thrusting herself in front of the terror-stricken old man.

"What?" he gasped, trembling in every limb.

"Did you ever in any way assist the mutiny?"

"I am not ashamed," he answered, with quavering voice, hopeful, no doubt, to secure favour from his feminine auditors by straightforwardness of speech, "I am not in the least ashamed to admit that I was impartial enough, while in India during the mutiny, to assist in many good ways both the insurrectionary natives and the European residents."

"I know!" cried the Frenchwoman, zealous to assist the cause of this darkly accused

Croesus. "You, sare, vas the goot Samaritain." Then she nodded, smiling, to her daughter, as who should say the impeached man had erred only in his all-embracing philanthropy.

The girl, upon her mother's favouring words, stepped back, with a sigh of relief, to her former position.

"I succoured all who were in sore need," proceeded the old man, evidently much heartened by the favour accorded him by his fair auditors; "I pitied the poor victims of the *émeute*, and helped them, without respect to their colour or creed, oftentimes at my great personal risk. I am blamed now, it would seem, inasmuch as that I, on occasion, having given half a cupfull of water to some fainting Christian, hesitated not to dedicate the remaining portion to the parched lips of a dying Hindoo."

"Votre oncle," said the little Frenchwoman to me, with her hands uplifted in strong admiration for the subject of her regard, "*il est un homme d'excellence*. Oh, monsieur!" she added, with sudden access of emotion, "go to him, et demandez son grâce."

I was now in a dilemma. I had rushed in here to ask a serious question, and it had been answered, as I might easily have foreseen,

apparently satisfactorily by the individual whom it concerned. I plainly perceived that, unless I could at once secure the assistance of the reserve force, the wisest course for me to adopt would be to beat a speedy retreat.

Promptly I addressed my uncle, asking him if he were willing to meet the men who were waiting outside, and at the same time I offered him the assurance that I should indeed rejoice if he proved himself innocent of the charges which these men imputed to him.

“Yes!” exclaimed the young actress, with shrill vehemence of voice, and looking upon me with fierce sparkling eyes, “your friends shall come in here, and when they have been proved liars, they shall be beaten out again.”

The old man stood in the shadowy background, with his silent, constant companions flanking him, and all appearing ghostly in the feeble illumination of a quaint lamp, which I happen to know had once done office in an Etruscan tomb. In the immediate foreground stood the bright youthful figure of the fair actress, with her exquisitely symmetrical arm outstretched towards me, and her golden-crowned head raised erect in passionate scorn.

The scene was, indeed, a remarkable one, and realized to my mind the conception of a

genie of light provoked by some unholy incitement to aid the defence of a spirit of darkness.

"Lakshmi," cried the gloomy figure, with appealing, fearful voice. "Bid not others come in here, but rather dismiss the unwelcome one we have."

"The others must and shall come in," returned the imperious young beauty. "How else are they to be confounded?"

"No, no, no," wailed the wretched old man, deeply alarmed by the presumptuous order of the wilful one, yet strangely afraid to exercise his own will in the matter.

"I have said they shall come in," returned the fair tyrant, turning round to the house-master, and speaking now with measured, calm-seeming accents. Then she took up a curiously inscribed bamboo cane from a table at her hand, and holding it forth, with suddenly changed, passionate tone and aspect, she cried out,—“Look here, Mr. Gall, I promise you, when you have proved these two men liars, I will thrash them with my own hand.”

I heard now at my back some sounds as of a laughing hyena, and, wheeling round, I observed, to my utmost disgust, the misshapen

form of the dwarf, Stoat, standing in the doorway.

I moved towards the door to execute the command of the fair arbitress of the situation ; but had proceeded only a few steps when she bade me stay, and then deputed the conduct of her order to the hateful dwarf.

My uncle made no further opposition to the will of his too-energetic fair advocate ; but, with tremulous voice, called her to come near to him, and bestow her attention upon a particular object he had in store for her.

I watched the action of the old recluse, and became convinced that he secretly possessed a most subtle appreciation of the leading impulses in the nature of woman ; for now, with skilful pretence of beguiling the tedium of waiting the arrival of the two men sent for, he submitted to the notice of his fair friends a sketch of a carriage which he described had been procured by him for the especial approval of his betrothed.

For me to behold at this time the interchange of attentions carried on by my companions caused much torture to my sensitive feelings. My senses devoured, as it were, everything that took place between the three persons with me in the room. I advanced

mechanically step by step, until I was close to the scene of my intense interest, when I stood with my whole attention concentrated on the theatre of action, whence my spirit derived its poignant anguish.

The old man noted my forward intrusion, and entertaining the opinion, no doubt, that I should suffer the pains of purgatory so long as I stayed in my present position, he abstained from challenging me.

The mother was, I plainly perceived, strongly animated with the desire that her daughter should wed this rich, sickly old man; and while I despised the sordid disposition of this self-seeking woman, I felt some pity for her, remembering that she had passed many years of her life amidst circumstances of grinding poverty. She was very effusive of commendation upon the submitted sketch, saying, in her peculiar jargon, that a coach made like it would be fit for a queen.

Her proud daughter, however, knew better than that, and declared, with supreme *hauteur*, that she should not care to have such a clumsy thing for *her* use.

The old man smiled, and wrung his hands in wondering admiration at the lofty young spirit he was buying with his gold. Now,

while I witnessed the present triumph of my bitterest enemy, I suffered very severe pangs indeed; yet I was able to find some balm for my wounded heart in the thought that he would, on becoming possessed of his coveted prize, surely find he had overlooked a good many serious drawbacks in his bargain.

“Another thing I will show you now,” said the old man, hobbling over to an escritoire, and producing therefrom a necklace composed apparently of gold and the rarest gems. With admirable composure he laid the bauble before the hungry eyes of his fair friends, explaining that it was only counterfeit, being a model designed in relation to an order he had given.

The strange old man played his part certainly with a rare cunning, and his present course of action, first to exhibit his carriage-lure, and then a thing of temptation of the devil's own liking, stamped him, I thought, as a very archpriest of wildest knavery.

The two women seemed almost fascinated by the glittering model; and now the little French-woman, I observed, nudged her daughter, as though to remind the admiring girl that the only approval which the precious stones waited for was her own.

“Try it on,” advised the guileful old man,

sitting now in his chair, and staring at the girl through his eye-goggles; looking as ugly a man as could well be.

The mother snatched up the gewgaws, and attempted to throw them around the shapely neck of her daughter; but the girl, frowning, drew back her head, and repulsed the action.

"Not yet," uttered the proud fair one, with a gesture towards the front of the house.

The old man, hearing the suggestive words, started up from his seat, and became instantly agitated again.

The sound of advancing footsteps now struck into the room, and each measured stroke seemed to affect the old man in the manner of a blow.

The young actress gazed anxiously towards the open doorway, with her fine features bearing an expression half of fear and half of defiance; but when the dreaded form came into view, she withdrew into the shade, evidently losing heart to assert her despotic pretensions at further length.

Spinner observed no ceremony on his entry into the room, but walked with bold air up to within a yard of the shrinking old man, and then stood for a few seconds regarding him in ominous silence.

"What want you here?" faltered the fearful recluse.

"I have come here to denounce you as a foul traitor!" said the stern young advocate, with hard voice, looking upon his victim with abhorrent expression. "I charge you with having maintained intimate communication with men whom you knew were murderers of your countrywomen and their children."

The old man's face grew positively distorted when he was thus denounced, and he glanced aside with the manner of one who is exasperated to a pitch of madness, and desires to find some fitting weapon wherewith to avenge himself.

"A foul traitor you are, and a coward too," continued Spinner, with withering scorn, watchful of his opponent's instinctive action.

"You lie!" cried the old man, with a scream.

"I hold the proofs of your damnable villainy," returned the accuser determinedly.

"*Fi donc!*" exclaimed the little Frenchwoman, gesticulating rapidly.

The young actress, excited by her mother's cry, bounded out of her retirement, and stood in the light before Spinner, with her countenance inflamed.

"Don't play the bully here any longer," she cried, with excited manner; "but bring your proof forward at once."

Spinner paid no heed to the impatient fair one; but again addressing the old man, bade him look towards the door, when he would see one of his old confederates in crime.

"I see only my old servant Chund," answered my uncle, with a sneer—"one who is at once a thief and a liar."

"Yet you employed him to convey your verbal messages in answer to those you received from the infernal miscreant called the Nana Saheb."

"The Governor-General himself had frequent communications with the man you refer to," said the old man, with great eagerness, as though he greatly appreciated his remark.

"Surely not in July of the year 1857, when the Cawnpore massacres took place?" said Spinner, deliberately, watching his opponent's face.

My uncle cast his eyes downward, as though to collect argument for the promotion of his case, and the while he grasped in his right hand a stone image of Thoth, the Egyptian god of eloquence, which stood upon the table near him.

The fair girl whose fate depended upon the issue of the question now in dispute, stood in rapt attention, supporting herself with her hand placed upon the back of a chair, and looking alternately at the feeble, stooping figure of the old man, and the upright muscular form of his mysterious accuser.

It was not, I believe, an inadvertent action on my uncle's part, when he laid his hand upon the curious effigy of an ancient mystic faith, for although he was deeply informed in scholarly lore, he was, like many another book-learning man, given to superstitious fancies such as the world would account peculiar only to childhood.

When at length he lifted up his head to speak again, it seemed as though his contact with the cold stone idol had added only to his misery by driving his blood back upon his heart, for his face and hands now appeared ashy pale.

"Do you base your malicious charge against me only upon the word of your lying witnesses?" he inquired, with quivering lips.

"I have firmer evidence than that," returned Spinner, with voice expressive of self-confident strength of position. Then he produced his pocket-book, and extracting from it two papers,

he held them open in the full light of the lamp for the inspection of his opponent.

If the papers now shown to the old man had contained his death-warrant, he could not have suffered a more severe shock than that caused him by his recognition of the small documents shown him by the young barrister. He—poor wretch!—strained forward from his chair, altogether losing for the moment the consciousness that every eye watched his movements; and after a short inspection he laid himself back again, gasping for very breath.

“Abominable forgeries!” he murmured, faintly.

The fair young actress, with pitying heart, fetched some water from an adjacent table, and offered it to the lips of the stricken old man; but her merciful action was not accompanied by any words of sympathy.

“Let Stoa do it!” he cried, in broken accents, clutching his chair convulsively with both hands.

The familiar, with lynx-like power of hearing, caught at the door the low-muttered words referring to himself, and came forward instantly to the help of his master; to whom he administered some essence which revived him in a miraculously short space of time.

"Those papers," said the old man, on his recovery, pointing to the evidential sheets with his lean, crooked forefinger, resembling the talon of some bird of prey, "are sophisticated copies of two others I remember of."

"This one," said Spinner, calmly, indicating a particular paper, "is no copy; but the original note, as indited by your own hand, in answer to one you received ostensibly from the hand of the murderer Nana Saheb; but which note was a copy only, the original being the other now in my possession."

The old man stared again at the manuscripts with eager interest, and then smiled and shook his head.

"It is said," proceeded Spinner, with his piercing eyes mercilessly contemplating the denounced one, "'put not your faith in princes'; but you have erred in the opposite direction by putting your faith in servants."

"Now you confound yourself," cried the old man, watchful of the slightest chance to catch his enemy tripping.

"A clever retaliation!" commented Spinner, with dry emphasis, who, while still regarding stedfastly his wily antagonist, went on to say,—
"The man Chund, with another Hindoo known as Assa Rao, were usually employed as emissaries

to carry messages to and from the infamous Bithoor Maharajah and his various friends, and having been commissioned to convey a written message from their master at Cawnpore to you at Lucknow, in the month of August of the year 1857—which date succeeded that of the damnable massacre at Cawnpore—prudently considering that their master's note to you was one likely to be found useful in case of need, they made a careful copy of it, and gave you that copy, retaining the original for future private use. As you may imagine, they performed a similar course with your answering note to their master."

The doom-encompassed one looked now into the face of his factotum with a reproachful expression, such as Tiberius might once have directed towards the faithless Sejanus.

"Who is this man?" he moaned.

The evil familiar then advanced his ghoul-like face close to his master's ear, and whispered a few words in it, whereupon the unhappy man stared at me with an expression of hate, as though he had been told that his stern accuser was playing his present part at my instruction.

"The notes I have," proceeded Spinner, with chant-like tone, sounding as terrible as

the dread moan sometimes heard at sea, which announces the devastating sweep of the furies, "are in cipher. But I have been able to identify the one as of your own handwriting by comparing it with a note which you sent from Devonshire to your nephew."

"Then," cried the old man, with sudden animation, "you are unable to interpret the cipher?"

"I confess my inability in that respect," replied Spinner, with perfect composure. "I expect, however, shortly to be in possession of another paper, which is missing at the present time, and which contains the key to your cipher. It is a copy made by the crafty Assa Rao from a deciphering-table once in the private custody of his late master, the Nana Saheb."

The old man now glanced into the evil countenance of his familiar, as if to prompt him to careful attention, and then, turning his eyes again upon his tormentor, he remarked, with ill-assumed indifference,—

"You pay for your spurious papers, of course?"

The astute young advocate smiled contemptuously at the cunning question of his adversary, and gently made answer,—

"I paid, indeed, very highly for the two papers which I have shown you. And I expect I shall have to bid royally for the third, considering it will *now* be coveted by you."

"I care nothing for it," said the old man, with agitated voice, strongly belying his assertion: "it would be dear at a pice."

"It would be, I think, evil for you," remarked Spinner, to his adversary's evident consternation, "in the event of the missing key not being forthcoming; as, with this damnable proof at hand of your having been in communication with the Nana Saheb after his hellish deed, it would certainly be generally considered that your mysterious cipher discusses some plot—intended to have been carried out at Lucknow, for instance—similar to that performed at Cawnpore."

The wretched man now sought the eye of his living idol, as though to find strength and comfort from her in his dire affliction; but she returned him a stony look, cold as that which continually rested upon the immobile features of his jade-fashioned figure of the goddess Lakshmi. This new cause for sorrow totally disheartened him, for he sank back, with a piteous moan, into his chair.

"You are all Christians," he presently muttered, in broken accents, and his limbs quivering as though stricken with palsy; "you therefore condemn me for my clemency towards the unfortunate."

"You will cause him ze death," cried the little Frenchwoman to Spinner, pointing to the helpless form on the chair. "Don't you see?"

"I sincerely hope not," answered Spinner, with the unmoved air of a doomsman. "He deserves not that mercy."

"Lakshmi!" feebly ejaculated the wretched old man, holding out his trembling hand with the lingering hope of receiving a touch of pity from her whom he associated with that Hindoo goddess, imagined by her votaries as the loveliest of all the deities of Indra's heaven.

He kept his shrivelled, skinny hand outstretched for nearly a minute without obtaining the favour craved for, and then he withdrew it, while a sigh of utter dejection escaped his lips.

The fair one, although unwilling to yield favour to the silent appeal made to her, was yet visibly affected by the yearning action of the old man, for her eyes became moist with tears, and her bosom heaved convulsively.

"Have you now said all?" she inquired of Spinner, after a short, dull interval of total silence.

Spinner was standing quite still, with his gaze directed upon the wreck he had made. His eyes bore no trace of pity in them, but were as merciless in expression as those of a hunter who has brought down a "man-eater," and contemplates its dying throes.

"I have yet to say a few words," he answered, calmly, referring again to his papers. "I have mentioned that these notes are written in cipher, and now I will state the important fact that Nana Saheb's note is marked with the date 15th July, 1857, in Murathi character, which departure from the rule of cipher occurred, I suppose, through inadvertence and hurry of the moment. Now the date of the paper is of very serious importance, for the Nana's brother on that particular date hazarded battle with the forces under General Havelock, and, suffering total defeat, retreated in confusion into Cawnpore, where the Nana had his quarters. Then it was, I presume, that the Nana, seeing his prospects almost hopeless, despatched this note to his friend Gall, requesting, very probably, his advice and earnest of fidelity."

“What say you now to this charge?” demanded the maiden, abruptly, of the despairing old man; and as she addressed him thus ungraciously, she looked down upon him with the scorn which the imperious charmer of old Egypt might have exhibited when regarding her lord weakly lamenting in his hour of trial.

He looked back for a moment into the beautiful, stern countenance of his questioner, and then turned away his eyes, feebly murmuring the pitiful words,—

“I can only say again that I am unjustly accused.”

The young beauty, upon hearing the irresolute answer of her intended lord, stamped her foot with angry impatience, and in the efflux of her vexing emotion shrilly exclaimed,—

“You must know that the truth will sooner or later be found out. Then why not tell it at once, and save yourself the misery of suspense? I would, if I were you.”

“Alas!” said the dejected old knave, with utterly despairing accents, “I am condemned because I have practised the charity of the Hindoo people, instead of that of the Christians.”

The evil-minded familiar appeared to enjoy the sad prospect of his master's misery, and never made the least effort to ease the wretched man of his load of distress. It is only reasonable to assume that Stoa disliked the notion of his master's marriage, and was now only too glad to see it strongly threatened.

My unhappy uncle, perceiving now, like Judas in his forlorn state, that Heaven, the world, and his own conscience were all arrayed against him, became quite unnerved, and attempted no more to strive for his own advantage.

The maiden looked scornfully down upon the miserable heap of humanity lying in the cushioned chair, and with bright sparks flashing star-like in her splendid eyes, she passionately exclaimed,—“Answer me this, Mr. Gall! Are you willing to have your case put before a judge and jury?”

“When?” said he, raising himself in his chair, and leaning forward with anxious expression.

“To-morrow!” cried the girl, with the natural impatience of her sex. “I suppose it cannot be done to-day.”

A shadow of bitter disappointment passed

over the livid features of the old man on hearing the impatient answer of the arbitress, and, with impotent irritability, he struck the arm of his seat with his palm, saying,—“A month hence would be only fair time to allow.”

“Eve,” entreatingly said the mother, advancing close to her daughter, “vous souvenez-vous de votre oncle?”

The maiden glanced at her mother with disdain, and uttered a resentful exclamation. Then she turned her indignant eyes again upon the old villain, and her exquisite features became at this moment mercilessly cruel in expression. Without speaking, she tore, almost savagely, from off the third finger of her left hand a golden ring, which she cast contemptuously at the feet of her unworthy lover. The glittering disc struck on its rim with force against the bare floor, and rebounding landed, strange to relate, on the lap of the old man's robe.

He seized it with trembling fingers, and, laying it on the table, covered it with his face. Then he uttered a groan, such as I hope and trust it will never be my lot to hear again.

“Oh, mon amie!” exclaimed the little Frenchwoman, in blank consternation, “qu'avez-vous fait?”

"My duty," answered the girl, proudly.
"That is all."

On Spinner's striking face there appeared a slight smile of triumphant satisfaction as, with a respectful bow, he stepped aside to allow free egress to the excited girl.

"Ma mère," she said, with hurried, nervous voice, using, in her keen excitement, the native language of her mother, "viens donc!"

"Oh ciel!" exclaimed the little French-woman, with lively gesticulation, "quel malheur!"

This poor woman entertained the opinion, I have every reason to believe, that the Indians were justified in their rebellion; and as she knew but very little of the particulars thereof, and, besides, had no partiality for the English people, she was not disposed to blame the old man for assisting the Sepoys, but rather to approve his unpatriotic conduct. When now she passed him, to join her daughter, she evinced her sympathy for him by walking on tiptoe, to avoid disturbing his ears by the sounds of her footsteps.

My feelings were harrowed to behold this man, who had laboriously acquired wealth and knowledge, and who had lately conceived the

hope that it was possible for him to enjoy life, despite his broken health, now pressing his face down upon the golden hoop, which once had been a symbol in his eyes of promise to his hopes, and now changed into a thing of mockery. He had lain in his abject posture without moving since he had first adopted it; but when the little Frenchwoman stole past his chair, he started up to his feet with a convulsive movement, and, clutching his sympathizer by the hand, eagerly bade her stay with him for yet a few minutes.

The poor woman stared in affright when she was thus arrested in her outward passage; and indeed every person present was startled by the extraordinary change which had come over the old man. He was no longer depressed in spirits, but elated to a strange degree. He turned with a ghastly smile towards the maiden, who was at the moment near the doorway, and, with the voice of a parent fondly addressing his child, he requested her to come and bid him a gentle farewell.

She looked anxiously at Spinner, with the evident desire that he should advise her in her painful situation, when the young advocate made her a sign, indicating that he considered it advisable that she should humour the unac-

countable whim of the ominously affected old miscreant.

With hesitating footsteps the girl then returned to the side of my uncle, and, looking upon him with her eyes suffused with tears, she extended her right hand, and, with a sob, uttered the single word, "Farewell!"

"Lakshmi," said he, putting his hands at his back with miserable affectation of playfulness, "you must take with you a little trinket, to keep in my remembrance."

"No, no!" answered the girl, with great agitation; "I would rather not take anything from you."

"Yes, yes, though," uttered the strangely revived one, hobbling over to his *escritoire*.

Spinner now turned to the Indian, Chund, who had been waiting passively near the door since the beginning of this terrible meeting, and addressed a sweeping gesture towards him. Then the silent, dusky figure glided swiftly out of the room, and his place knew him no more.

The old man was tardy in his proceedings at the *escritoire*, and, while his back was turned, the young actress appealed, by an energetic sign, to her mother to seize the opportunity to make their departure in peace. The little Frenchwoman would not, however, con-

sent to her daughter's silently expressed suggestion, but returned a sign to the girl to remain until the old man had accomplished his stated intention.

Eve yielded to her mother's desire, and now stood intently watching the movements of her rejected suitor, who was deliberately inspecting the contents of his *escritoire* by the aid of a small wax candle, and her countenance changed in its expression with the fitfulness of a spring day. She was evidently apprehensive that he had become upset in his reason, and that for her to oppose entirely his whimsical wish would cause him to become furious. The poor girl was suffering severely from her suspense, and appeared indeed almost distracted by her keen emotion.

"Oh!" at length she cried, in an agony of impatience, "I cannot stay here any longer."

Then the old man started up, saying hastily, with curious phraseology, that he was now ready to perform his promise. A strange suppressed wildness was apparent in his manner, as he returned to his chair, bearing in his hand a red-gold bracelet, set with magnificent iridescent opals, and enriched with filagree of exquisite Indian workmanship.

"This I give you," said he, holding up with his left hand the costly ornament to the view of the maiden, and extending to her his right, open, both of which trembled violently. "And now, Lakshmi, farewell."

"I cannot accept your present," returned the young actress, with choking voice; yet, despite her keen mental distress, fascinated by the resplendent bauble presented to her dazzled eyes; "I will not accept it," she added, throwing her hands behind her, and retreating a few steps. "You must keep it to give to—some one else."

The old man, upon the maiden's refusal of his offer, threw the rejected precious thing carelessly on the floor, and then, with unearthly voice, craved her to press his hand in farewell. "We shall never meet again, remember," he wailed, half in address to the terrified girl, and half in lament—"never! never! never!"

She stepped further back from him, holding her hand out in affright, and her features were now almost paralyzed with extreme terror.

The mad old man, with basilisk stare, advanced upon her, and was about to seize her extended hand, when Spinner, uttering a fearful cry, caught the fair girl rudely by her

shoulder, and forced her precipitately backward.

"What is it?" she cried, spasmodically.

"He means mischief," answered Spinner, placing himself by the old man, and raising his clenched fist menacingly on high. "See," he continued, pointing at his insane opponent's hand, "see, the venomous old snake now wears a ring where no ring was before."

"Oh! why is that?" gasped the terror-stricken girl.

"It is, I fear, a poisoned ring," said Spinner, fronting the old man threateningly.

I perceived that it was highly desirable that the quivering, excited girl should be removed immediately from the place, and I ventured to take her by the arm, when she clung to me in sudden hysterical terror, and piteously implored me to take her away.

When I had reached the door with my precious burden, my ears were horrified by a sound like the screech of an owl, and as I looked back I saw my wretched uncle struggling to force himself past his stout-hearted adversary. I waited to see the issue of the terrible contest, and presently beheld Spinner, to my intense relief, throw the old madman back upon a chair, and then slip the suspected ring

from his finger. Stoa at this time assisted the resolute young advocate to hold the furious old man in subjection. The present scene was indeed a most appalling one, and its terrible-ness was increased by the little Frenchwoman, who, during the time of the wild struggle, ran panic-stricken about the room, uttering shrill screams. Many of the curious things occupying the tables were overthrown and smashed, and amongst the wreckage was the jade figure of the god Thoth.

I tried to assure my frightened charge of her safety; but her fear was too intense to be allayed quickly, and for a while she clung to me with such a tight grasp as to render me unable to continue my progress. When at length, however, she became conscious that no danger was to be apprehended, her strength quite forsook her, and then, with a sigh, she fell senseless into my arms. I raised her from the ground, and looked for the last time into the chamber of misery, when I beheld, with painful interest, my unhappy uncle, now with his hopes overthrown, and his poor gods lying shattered at his feet, held forcibly down in the same chair in which the fair disturber of his former dull peace had reposed at her appearance before his wondering eyes. Feel-

ing heartsick at the misery of the scene I contemplated, I bore the senseless girl out of the accursed house into the open air, when I placed her, without intention, against the very post at which the accident had befallen her that had brought about her acquaintance with my uncle and myself. Then, as now, I remembered I had carried her in my arms in an unconscious state.

The little Frenchwoman happily came out of the house soon after, and relieved me of the care of her daughter.

"I must go and get some water," I uttered, almost bewildered.

"Voilà!" cried the impulsive little woman, pointing with dramatic gesture to the Thames.

There certainly was water in grand abundance in the direction indicated by my prompter, but I preferred to risk delay, and seek the desired fluid at some private house, as I thought that the Thames water was scarcely fitted to be used for a case of fainting.

When at length I returned, bearing a cup of water, I found that the fresh air had effected the recovery of my patient to consciousness, and her mother exercising her tongue once more in execration of England and all its people.

The maiden was, I plainly perceived, woe-fully shaken in her nervous system, and my heart was wrung to behold her now lift her pallid face and gaze around with dull apprehensive expression. She continued to stare thus for a few moments with an apparently confused anxiety; but presently recognizing the gloomy house opposite, she uttered a short convulsive gasp of terror, and covered her face with her hands.

I hailed a passing cab, and assisted the mother to transfer her girl into it. I felt anxious to get the sufferer away from the scene of her distress, and I told the driver to go on to Antonia Cottage. The poor maiden, overhearing me, started up from her seat, and, putting her head out of the window, appealingly uttered the doleful words, "No, no, no! never again there!"

I feared now that she would probably have increase of her nervous derangement if she were taken to her old home against her will, and I stated my fears on the subject to the mother.

"Ve go, zen, to ze hôpital," returned the little woman, decisively.

I felt my mind now in a positive turmoil. I wished with my whole heart to offer my purse to my two impecunious fair friends, and I could

not muster courage to do it. At length, however, I conceived the happy thought of making the offer of what gold I had in my possession in the way of a loan. The mother I found willing to accept my benefice, she being confessedly without monetary means of her own; but the proud maiden refused my offer with scornful vehemence.

"You insult us," she said, with a sob of wounded pride; and then warming with indignation, she gave way to tears, and passionately exclaimed,—*"How dare you, Mr. Amor, take such a liberty?"*

"Ah, oui!" chimed in the little Frenchwoman, ungenerously, *"zey all dare vit us; zese Englishmans."* And so saying, the highly impulsive daughter of Gaul looked at me with changed expression of ill-will.

I felt greatly annoyed on being thus subjected to an unkind repulse when I was trying to perform an act of friendliness in a delicate manner. I, however, did not express my feelings on the subject, but offered a few words of apology, and then made offer of my services in any way which might be acceptable.

The little Frenchwoman's countenance suddenly assumed, while I spoke, a triumphant expression, as though she had conceived a

happy thought, and thereupon she proceeded to state volubly, in her own language, to her daughter that a certain Monsieur Jacques Mercure would certainly take them into his hotel without requiring immediate payment. The individual referred to was, I remembered, the landlord of a small hotel in the district of Soho, and eked but his means of livelihood in practising the duties of ballet-master during the season of pantomime at the same theatre which commanded the services of my two fair friends.

I ventured now to inquire if I should instruct the cabman to drive to the hotel referred to, and I spoke now to my shrewish female friend for the first time in her own tongue—I have every reason to believe most execrably.

She answered me sharply in the affirmative, but evidently regarded me with renewed favour, as she now perceived that I was somewhat familiar with the language of languages.

The vehicle moved off, and I was left alone. I found myself now the cynosure of a circle of curious human eyes; and as I was pushing myself through the idle crowd of gazers, I was accosted by my old acquaintance, the policeman of the district, who said, in peculiar

phraseology, that he was sorry to see me still carrying on my "old game." I angrily bade him keep his impertinent remarks to himself; when he sneeringly rejoined that he did not mind telling me that the neighbourhood had been a remarkably quiet one until the evil hour when I took up my residence within it.

I passed on without another word, and had gone only a short distance homeward when I was joined by Spinner, who seemed as composed in mind as if nothing of any disagreeableness had occurred.

"Alone?" said he, with unfriendly emphasis, staring at me in a manner of concernment. "Where, then, are the two women?"

I explained briefly what had occurred from the time when I had quitted my uncle's miserable abode, relating also that the Frenchwoman and her daughter had gone to seek shelter in an hotel instead of their own home.

"And you let them go alone?"

"You see I did."

"Well, well, it is perhaps for the best," remarked my unfriendly companion, with a sarcastic smile upon his lips; and presently he added the taunting words, "I dare say that they will manage for themselves all the better without your friendly advice."

"You mean insolence!" I exclaimed, standing still, and staring at my companion with angry surprise.

He returned my stare, and after a pause, in which his feelings evidently waxed in bitterness to an ungovernable extent, he let loose his tongue in severe reproach upon me, saying that I had, in my stiffnecked conceit, tried always to thwart him in his most earnest designs.

I interrupted him, saying, with tone as determined as his own, that I could not well understand why he should seek so frequently to revile me, and I bade him remember that I was decidedly unwilling to allow myself to serve as a puppet in his hands. "You have held me," I concluded, almost beside myself with excitement, "to a deadly engagement, which is plainly unjustifiable from its provocation. But, look you, James Spinner, I am ready to answer your call when you please to utter it."

"I promise you I will utter it soon," he returned, with suppressed, rageful voice.

I drew aside to let him go on, as it was apparent to my mind that further conversation between us would surely lead to violence. He paused for a moment, with hesitation, as though he were disposed to annoy me still further, and

his eyes glanced wickedly, and upon his lips rested the old cruel smile; but, to my surprise, he checked his manifest inclination, and abruptly walked on with giant strides.

I went on my way home in abstracted thought. I tried vainly to divine what particular motive Spinner had had in acting towards my uncle as he had done; yet I was not so much astonished at it as might reasonably be imagined, for, indeed, action of the kind was, I remembered, exactly suitable to the peculiar liking of the erratic young advocate.

With poignant mental anguish I reflected upon the awful events of the past hour, and then, alas! the thought flashed into my mind that these dreadful occurrences, while having wrought sad havoc upon the undeserved promise of my uncle's life, had freed the young actress from her unsanctified engagement.

When I arrived home, I was immediately informed that Miss Magnet was sitting up to see me, and though I dreaded to subject myself to have my wounds opened afresh, I obeyed the command now given me.

I went upstairs, and entered the private room, when my eyes encountered the unwelcome figure of Mrs. Ellice, sitting in her accustomed place, with a sourer expression on her face than

ever. She was stitching away at something close by the lamplight, and conversing with her aged relative.

"I hope, sir," said she, regarding me with mock deference, "you have not torn yourself away so early from your theatrical friends on our account."

"Sit down, sir," said the abrupt old lady, pointing to a seat placed in front of her.

I was wary enough to effect a change in the position of my seat ere I settled myself down upon it; and, as I did so, I noticed that a shade of annoyance passed over the face of my ill-wisher, and then I secretly congratulated myself on having checkmated her by my present move. To my blank consternation, she imitated my ruse, and likewise shifted her chair, so as to sit opposite me in my new position, thus proving herself a far higher adept in cunning than I, for in making her strange move she vouchsafed the plausible explanation that she fancied her aunt was a little dull of hearing that night in her left ear.

"You have made it dull yourself then," said the old lady, sharply, annoyed at the slight put upon her ear, "dinning in it as you have done."

"Very likely," returned Mrs. Ellice, dryly, never at a loss for a reply.

The venerable one was accustomed to her niece's acrid turns of humour, and, being herself given to bitter retort, she was never deeply affected by any stinging remark falling to her own share.

"Now, sir," she said, briskly, "let us hear how you got on with the stage person."

"Yes," remarked Mrs. Ellice, observing that I was unprepared to answer the formidable question now addressed to me. "Tell us plainly if she has caught you in her toils again."

I could easily perceive that my persistent enemy was seeking to excite me to forget myself, when I should appear in a rankly unamiable light in the eyes of my indulgent patroness; and as I discerned these agencies at work upon me, I determined to try my utmost to keep my temper well in check.

"Relations," I said, dryly, with pain at my heart, "betwixt my uncle and the player person are broken off."

"Broken off!" repeated the ladies, in concert.

"Yes, broken off; and Spinner did it."

"D—n your Spinner!" cried the relic of a past rude age, forgetting herself in the strong impulse of the moment, as Lady Strange once

did in company when some one referred to Charles Stuart by the title of "Pretender."

"Aunt!" cried Mrs. Ellice, rising from her chair, and staring upon the free-spoken old dame in positive alarm.

"Aye, aye!" continued the impulsive old lady, with a strange blush upon her countenance, the first I had ever seen there. "I'm apt to forget that new times make new manners."

"I never heard such a thing before," cried Mrs. Ellice.

"My dear," said the old lady, with a wicked twinkle in her eye, "that is because you have seen forty-five summers only."

"Forty-five, aunt!" screamed Mrs. Ellice, now transferring her interest entirely from the player person. "Why, you must know I am not nearly so old as that."

"How much younger are you, my dear?" inquired the old lady, with a penetrating gaze upon the remonstrant.

"Younger?" returned Mrs. Ellice, confusedly, finding herself in a most disagreeable position. Pausing for a few seconds, she pretended to reflect, and then, with her face all aflame, she said, sharply,—"Why, I am not yet quite forty-four."

"I am thinking," remarked the octogenarian, confidently, "you will find yourself mistaken there."

Now I feared that, in consequence of this little interlude, the younger actor in it would indulge her spite in making my position as uncomfortable as she might find it possible for her to effect. Mrs. Ellice, being a woman of unamiable temperament, was not likely, thought I, to overlook the fact of my having witnessed her humiliation.

"Well, now," said the old lady, turning her attention again to me, "let us speak of your case."

"Oh, aunt!" cried my ill-wisher, with angry impatience, "pray let us have done with strained civilities in our question. You wish Mr. Amor to give up altogether his attentions to the play-acting person. Bid him, then, say yes or no, and make a decision in the matter at once."

"Tuts!" ejaculated the kind-hearted old dame, with a reproving glance at her niece. And then she went on to inform me that a strange man had called in my absence, and had explained to Mrs. Ellice that his business was concerning a play of my composition, which I had submitted to his notice.

"Yes, he told me so," chimed in my enemy, with evident assurance of my speedy abashment. I perceived now the purpose she had had in view when effecting her change of position, so as to bring to bear upon me the full power of her eyes. She had, I plainly saw, arrived at the conclusion that my dramatic composition was a matter which I myself secretly regarded as of an unholy nature, and therefore had been circumspect in the mention of it. "Play-writing," she added, with a ring of triumph in her harsh voice, "you must know, is a species of devil-service."

I was not in the least abashed by the intelligence I now received; but I was excited with curiosity to ascertain if my ambitious play had been accepted; and though I was desirous of maintaining a proud reserve, I could not refrain from putting the question pressing at my heart.

"You are not ashamed, then?" quoth the bigoted one, with a dark frown clouding her brow.

"Ashamed!" said I, looking at her with feigned surprise; "ashamed of what?"

"Of your multiplied wickedness," she answered. "Why, sir, is it not matter for shame that you have given yourself up to a woman who

dances half dressed upon a public stage? that you have so far forgotten your Christian duty as to devote your abilities to the producing of a play? that you have so far forgotten your social position as to accept the friendship of horrid low men, like that one now in gaol, and that other who took the liberty of calling here for you to-day? that—”

“Will be enough for the present,” interrupted the old lady, with remarkable readiness of wit, holding up her palm suddenly at the same moment, when she snatched the word, as it were, out of the mouth of her virulent niece. “And now, sir,” she quickly continued, looking at me with sternness, evidently assumed, to pacify the resentment of the checked one, “explain why it is you have never told us of your play.”

I answered promptly that I had not been so far lost in conceit as to go about proclaiming that I had written a play, while I was unprovided with a proper verdict of its worth; and that I was, indeed, sorry that the fact of my having produced this composition was known even then, considering the merit of the work had not yet been admitted by any competent authority.

“You refer,” commented my puritanically

principled companion, with severe emphasis, "to the authority of panderers to ungodly pleasure-seekers."

I retorted upon her with the provable assertion that ministers of the Gospel have written plays; when she said she had no doubt that such unfaithful ministers would command my especial favour. "Now tell me," she concluded, with manifest anticipation of a triumph over me, "do you suppose that Mr. Ellice would countenance such work?"

"The rector reads plays, I know," I answered, delighted to administer this telling stroke upon my relentless enemy; "the plays of Shakespeare, Sheridan, Molière, and other famous dramatists."

"You cannot say what purpose the rector has in reading plays," said my discomfited opponent, meanly advancing a subterfuge whereby to effect her retreat out of an untenable position.

The old lady had waxed exceedingly impatient, and now cried out, with shrill voice, that she insisted on my saying at once if I intended to try and earn my livelihood by play-writing; whereupon I felt so highly amused that I could not restrain my feelings, but gave way to laughter.

"Why, madam," I cried, when partly recomposed, "my livelihood in such case would, doubtless, be of a nature much after that of a Jack snipe."

"You think to hoodwink us all, do you?" sneered the ungenerous one. "Then I must apprise you I am not likely to be one of your dupes."

"Why, Mrs. Ellice," I said, with a wicked laugh, "you have found, I declare, a veritable mare's-nest."

"Boy!" cried the old lady, admonishingly, shaking her head at me, with an irrepressible smile playing over her dear face.

"He is positively insolent, aunt," cried Mrs. Ellice, looking with distressed expression towards Miss Magnet. "Will you dismiss him from the room?"

"No, Emily; no," replied my staunch old friend, firmly. Then the smile upon her face gave place to a frown, and her innate grave nature once more asserted itself. "I would not have the boy a poor dummy, frightened to say a word for himself. Now, my dear, I cannot think you have fair reason to complain of his words to you, for he has said nothing that you need make a fuss about; and then you have badgered him yourself at a pretty rate."

"Oh, aunt!"

"Now, let us all go to bed," said the magnanimous old lady, decisively, reaching forth her hand to me, and wishing me kindly a good-night.

I fervently kissed the gentle hand, wishing my dear friend a good-night in return, and then, making an obeisance to my foe, I withdrew from the room, and proceeded at once to my couch.

I shrewdly suspected that my two recent companions had not proceeded to interrogate me as they had planned to do, and that the cause of their failure to act on their prepared scheme lay in the difference of their disposition towards me.

CHAPTER II.

I CONDUCTED myself with exemplary regularity for a week after the terrible scene at my uncle's house in which I had acted a part. I could not, of course, make inquiries after my miserable relative's condition in the usual manner; but, despite the abominable unworthiness of the man, I could not but pity him, and I called every day at his physician's private house to inquire concerning him. On the fourth day I saw the physician himself, when he stated that his patient was indeed very dangerously unwell, and stood in constant peril of sudden dissolution; and he stated, further, that he had informed the unhappy man of the attention which I had devoted towards him. I expressed my regret that he had made mention to my uncle of my continued interest in him, when my interlocutor, ignorant of the exact relations existing betwixt his patient and myself, pleasantly remarked that he believed the information which he had given to my

uncle could do no harm to either one concerned in it.

"You should hasten to make peace with your uncle," he concluded, with friendly regard towards me. I thought fit to conceal my opinion on the subject, but honestly returned him my thanks for his considerate counsel.

I was, as might properly be expected, keenly desirous to learn how my idol progressed from day to day in her health, and I paid a series of visits at the little hotel in Soho wherein she had taken up temporary residence. I obtained an interview with the mother on the occasion of my third visit, when she appeared to regard me as an enemy to her interests, and was scarcely civil to me.

This woman possessed a very lively imagination in addition to her strong sympathies. Having beheld her air-drawn castles miserably dispelled, she naturally felt resentful; and now, choosing me for her scapegoat, she addressed herself to hate me with all her might.

She had already forgotten that I could speak in the French tongue, and I did not care to prompt her memory in that respect, so she continued to use her incongruous hybrid tongue,

to her own certain distaste, as also to the amusement of another person.

The disposition of her unreasoning mind to extreme prejudice was illustrated strongly in the matter of her usual language, as she, being unable to properly acquire the English tongue, did not ascribe the fault to her own want of aptitude, but, with a ridiculously vain assumption, to the multiple imperfections of the language itself.

“Ma fille,” she answered, to my anxious inquiry, “takes again sa nourriture. Oh, she shall be vell bientôt.”

From my heart, I responded that what I heard was very cheering news, whereupon my informant, shrugging her shoulders and making a peculiar grimace, remarked, in her native tongue, that she believed my congratulations were tainted strongly with self-interest. I felt disposed to pity, rather than condemn, this poverty-stricken woman for giving way to an unreasoning ill-will, seeing that she had just experienced a crushing blow to her hopes, and suspected me as the moving agent of the disaster. I therefore passed over her offence in silence, and shortly took my leave.

Miss Magnet continued to be as kind to me as ever; indeed, rather more so, I should say.

I was again closeted with the old lady and her niece the next day to that on which the interview I have narrated occurred, when I was called upon to satisfy the natural inquisitiveness of these members of the gentle sex with a full description of the events which had taken place, both at the little Frenchwoman's house and that of my uncle ; and I was able happily to acquit myself so as to avoid a complete rupture with the younger lady.

"Do you intend to further lower yourself," said Mrs. Ellice, with a sneer, when I was taking my leave of her and her aunt, on the day I refer to, "by following your actress person to her—hotel?"

"Ma'am," I replied, with towering indignation, "pray remember that the young lady is very ill."

"Then has she chosen you," said the cold-hearted one, with mockful interrogative terms, "as her physician?"

"Emily," interposed the generous-souled old lady, "you should sometimes try to put yourself in Frank's place."

"I am afraid, aunt," replied Mrs. Ellice, with a foreboding drawl in her accents, "you will spoil your Frank with excessive kindness."

“Better that,” said the aged one, quietly, with a soft, sad smile upon her thoughtful features, “than harden his heart with excessive unkindness.”

I remarked that my dear old friend, after uttering her gentle expression, was evidently refreshed in mind with the hallowed memories of the long-gone days of her youth, as she then involuntarily pressed her keepsake rings, and her eyes glistened with tears.

I felt my spirit grow tender within me on beholding this affecting sight, and, being unwilling to exhibit my emotion, I stole quietly from the room.

A week passed away, and everything of interest to me was still in a state of suspense; but, on the last night of that trying week, I was startled by the intelligence that on the following morning my honoured patroness would depart, on a short visit, to a property of her own, situate in Cornwall, and would be accompanied by the fair Emily Ellice.

I was given this news by Mrs. Ellice, and at the same time she intimated to me that it was the old lady's especial wish that I should continue to reside in my present quarters during her absence.

“The whole business,” concluded my

unfriendly informant, "was settled only this morning, after you had gone ; hence the reason of your not having heard of it before now." Then she left my room where she had made her announcement. But, ere I had recovered from my surprise, she put her head in again, and added—with a consideration which I could not believe was of her own inspiration—the confidential advice,—“ You will, of course, see the ladies off in the train.”

A sense of uneasiness was in my mind that night as I laid my head on the pillow. A vague dread possessed me of some impending serious event. It seemed to me as though Fate had ordained that I should be isolated gradually from all the agencies calculated to counteract those influences which were luring me from the straight path of duty. I passed a restless night, and no sooner had ghostly pale streaks appeared upon the eastern sky, than I leapt out of bed, and dressed myself for the day.

When at length I was sitting at breakfast, my brother came in quite unexpectedly upon me. I had called on the previous day at his hotel, but had found him absent from home. His present visit to me was one simply of courtesy. He joined me in my meal, when I informed him of the duty which I was engaged

to perform. The foolish fellow thereupon broke off his act of feeding, and proceeded to walk about the room in a manner as though he considered that some deception had been practised upon him.

“Look’ee here, Frank !” he cried, abruptly, shaking his finger impressively at me. “You are, I think, going on just anyhow.”

I answered that I could not in the least understand his meaning. He was not, to judge from his conduct, himself clearly aware what he meant; for he offered me no explanation, but yielding to sudden anger, kicked a footstool straight against the wall. Then, uttering a bearish growl, he resumed his seat at the table, and gave himself a further liberal supply of food. He grumbled and growled over his breakfast just like some wild thing, and appeared desirous of having a row with me. I, however, paid no attention to him; but perused a newspaper until the silly fellow had done with his idle complaining.

“We start from here at half-past nine,” I said to him, on his giving up making disagreeable sounds.

“I shall go with you,” he replied, in the manner of a spoilt child. “You will see if I don’t.”

I reminded him that he could not go without permission from the ladies, and at the same time offered him my hopeful opinion that, if he made a request for a place in the carriage it would, no doubt, be granted.

“You will not, of course,” I concluded, believing that my love-struck brother was liable to imagine vain things, “be able to make love to Emily on the way to the train.”

“That all depends,” he sagely replied. Then, after a thoughtful short pause, he arose from his chair, and, coming close up to me, brought down his giant hand familiarly upon my shoulder, causing me a painful shock, and said, coaxingly,—“Will you, old fellow, engage the senior party in a palaver, and so give me a chance, you know?”

I could not find it in my heart to assist him in any one way in the pressing of his suit upon Emily. I considered his present scheme too absurd to be seriously treated, and I passed it over without comment.

He seemed to think that my silence was favourable to his precious proposal; for his countenance beamed with a hopeful expression, as he resumed his peregrinations about the room. Presently, with sudden remembrance, he intimated that he had learned from Spinner

that I had lately been helping, to use his own choice expression, to turn the Chelsea Rajah's sweetheart against him.

I had intended to inform him fully of the events which had occurred in our relative's abode; but his callous expression in relation to the subject totally disheartened me, and I could only ask him if Spinner had stated particulars of the matter in question.

"I am told only this much," he replied, bluffly, with an indignant look in his honest eyes; "that you and Spinner together excited the old man's sweetheart to swear off from him, and that you then somehow frightened him out of his senses. Now," he added, with reprehensive manner, "I don't mind telling you it is my opinion that you would have been quite justified in bringing an action of damages against the old man; but in acting as you have done you performed an out-and-out damnably cruel piece of business."

"Oh," I cried, impatiently, "money has no power in this matter."

"Look'ee here, old boy!" he said, with an unfitting frown upon his brow, and pointing at me with his forefinger, which looked fit to serve on occasion as an instrument of moderate punishment. "You have yet to earn your

money, and, like many other of your fellows, you try to make out that you have an equal right with a man who has by dint of hard work secured a fortune, to look out for a wife. Now that's all very well for you, and such as you, but it is scandalously unjust, to say the least of it."

"Speak only for yourself," said I, pained to hear my unworthy uncle's cause championed thus inferentially by my brother. "You have made money, and you think that ought to secure for you the hand of an exceeding rare maiden."

"Look'ee here!" again said he, now grasping me by my arm, and gazing appealingly into my face. "I want you to assist me to catch Miss Ellice. Let me sit next her in the carriage if the chance occurs."

"You may, for me."

"Good!" he uttered, with satisfaction, seemingly impressed in his simple mind with the idea that his battle was already nearly won; and now, in his restored good humour, he intimated that he would take care I should benefit for my friendly services to him.

"What!" I exclaimed, with scorn, "do you really suppose that I mean to sell you my honourable independence?"

"No, no, no!" he quickly uttered, interrupting me in my expression of disdain; and now, with admirable tact, he assumed a resentful air, as he went on to say,—“My meaning is not exactly as you have taken it; but that I shall be willing, if you oblige me, you know, to do something for you in return. And I promise you, old fellow,” he concluded, with a dry humour which I had not thought him capable of, “I never will knowingly offend your fine feelings by offering you filthy lucre, though even I may see you standing in need of it.”

I could plainly perceive that my brother, like Shakespeare's Enobarbus, though rude and blunt of speech, was good as gold at heart, and I was now impressed with the self-humiliating opinion that this man, though unpossessed of any delicacy of feeling, was nevertheless a far more useful individual for the world than I, with my higher pretensions.

“I am convinced you mean well by me, and I beg you will accept my thanks,” I impulsively returned, holding out my hand, when my brother immediately grasped it, and gave it such a severe squeeze as to cause the sinews thereof to crack again.

“And now, old fellow, I want your advice,”

he said, with manner of familiar deference very unusual with him; and, while he now spoke, he pushed me gently towards the window, so that I should stand with my eyes looking outward, and not at his face, as formerly. Then he went on to say that he had, owing to his long banishment from polite female society, almost forgotten the rules of perfect propriety, and desired that I should coach him up in the matter. "I did not notice my deficiency just at first," he concluded, with *naïve* candour; "but I see it now only too plainly."

I readily consented to favour him to what extent I could on the subject he referred to, when he instantly put my promise to the test in a direction which was certainly not calculated to afford any pleasure to me.

"Would it be proper for me," he inquired, with strange hesitation, "to offer some pretty present to Miss Ellice?"

"Decidedly not, under present circumstances," I answered, already almost despairing of my pupil.

"Oh, surely there are some things I might offer without the risk of offence," he suggested, with his wish father to his thought; "small birds, for instance, or some small harmless beast."

"I think not," I asserted, remembering that my advice-seeker had actually advanced his desire of wooing to the father of the honoured fair one.

The simple fellow propounded no further question to me, but seemed to be labouring under the impression that I was not acting up to my promise in pronouncing against his submitted question, and I could easily perceive that I had not convinced him.

Mrs. Ellice came to us now, and greeted my brother with a warmth which I could only account for by the hypothesis that she intended to demonstrate thereby to me the extent of my deprivation. I ventured, however, to ask her to favour my brother with a seat in the carriage.

"I have no doubt," she said, to the blushing big man, with evident satisfaction, "I shall be able to get you a place in the carriage." Then she departed, to arrange concerning the new member proposed for convoy of the ladies to the railway-station.

Very shortly after this my brother and I received a summons to attend upon our charges, and when we entered the carriage we were, to Edward's chagrin, instructed to sit together, facing the ladies. I contrived, despite Miss

Magnet's remonstrance, to place my brother opposite Emily; but the foolish fellow, so far from appearing gratified by this favour, was exceedingly discomposed, and his trepidation increased to such a painful extent that he must at last have wished himself possessed of the ring of Gyges to procure his instant invisibility.

Miss Magnet was attired in a dress of rich black satin, having its cuffs and neck fringed with goffered lawn. Her bonnet was of purple-grey silk, crowned with a grand ostrich plume, and was of very capacious dimensions. Altogether, her costume well became her; and I was so struck by her greatly improved appearance, that I impulsively took the liberty to compliment her on the subject; whereupon the good old dame actually blushed, and pleasantly rated me as an idle fellow, whose chief concern lay in the study of the various appearances of women. "You will come to some sad end, I fear," she concluded, with an ominous shake of her head. Yet, notwithstanding her severe dictum, she was evidently none the less favourably disposed towards me.

I observed now that my brother and Emily were not getting on together at all well. Emily's face was heightened in tint, and she

was sustaining her part in the conversation by means of monosyllabic words. Edward, on the other hand, was trying to make himself agreeable, while being subject to an almost total confusion of mind. With desire to befriend him, I interposed my word to give him an opportunity of recovering his fortitude; but, while I so favoured him, I had but little hope that he would succeed in securing any great advantage for himself from my favour.

"Do you like dogs?" he said, after a pause, and now staring almost wildly at the gentle Emily.

"Dogs?" she repeated absently, gazing out at the street.

"Yes—little ones, you know," said the anxious inquirer; and now, in the ardency of his desire for the attention of the fair one, he actually touched her fingers, which were resting upon the ledge of the carriage window.

"Oh, yes," she answered, with a slight inflection of annoyance in her voice.

"What about a Maltese dog, the size of a cocoa-nut, and as white as milk?"

The old lady overheard Edward's extraordinary question, and thereupon cried out that surely the man had taken leave of his understanding.

"A dog the size of a cocoa-nut!" she repeated, with disdain. "Why, I never heard of such a thing before."

I could not help laughing at Miss Magnet's peculiar manner in criticizing my brother's hasty remark. Emily, too, was amused, and had recourse to her pocket-handkerchief in the considerate desire to conceal the display of her emotion.

Edward grew bold with resentment on finding his words treated as though they had been extremely vain and foolish, and presently he spoke up, declaring, with mistaken apprehension, that he was prepared to produce within the hour a dog answering to his description. On the impulse of the moment, the foolish fellow, while making this assertion, thrust his hand deep into the pocket of his trousers, with the evident design of producing some coin to offer in stake of the question he had submitted.

"But surely, Mr. Amor," wickedly said the old lady, "you never walk out with such a dog at your heels?"

The ridiculous picture thus suggested, though affording much fresh amusement to Emily and me, was not appreciated by the leviathan swain, who was extremely sensitive

on the subject of his stupendous physical development.

"I can't see the joke," he said, with serious voice, looking all round, as if inviting enlightenment.

"I am sorry to see you annoyed," said the young maiden, with concerned air, observing that the simple fellow was hurt in his feelings. Now her soft beaming eyes rested upon him, evidently giving, by some subtle process, a balm-like comfort to his wounded heart. "The laugh was not, I am sure, to your disfavour."

He instantly recovered his wonted spirits on being thus given attention, and then, with strange obstinacy, reverted to the subject which had been so irreverently treated.

"I keep all kinds of dogs," said he, in reinstated cheerfulness; "some the size of a calf, and some the size of a guinea-pig."

He had now very little time left to explain any particular subject which he may have had in mind; yet he managed to describe, though in a peculiar manner, the general appearance of his house and grounds in Ceylon, together with the home-life and out-door sports of the English residents there. He was, I thought, disposed unduly to introduce a personal inte-

rest in all his narrations; and, indeed, to judge by the prominence which he gave himself in his recitals, he must have considered that the island was not inhabited by any man of greater authority than himself. "I have at my place," he concluded, with a foolish grin upon his disingenuous features, "a caracal trained for hunting"; then, on finding that not one of his auditors was yet informed of the nature of a caracal, he proceeded, with great satisfaction to himself, to describe it as an animal of the lynx species, which was employed in certain parts of India for the capture of the smaller *feræ naturæ*.

Astonishment being expressed by the gracious young maiden at the strange information now given her, the marvel-monger, in his excessive delight at the interest he had evoked, proceeded, with sad neglect of his proper caution, to explain that he had lent his caracal to a widow lady in Ceylon for the time of his absence.

We arrived now at the railway-station, and my brother instantly leaped out of the carriage, and secured for himself the rare pleasure of a pressure from Emily's hand as she alighted once more upon *terra firma*. Miss Magnet, learning that the train would not start for ten

minutes, bade me stay with her in the carriage; and then instructed her fair young friend to go on with my brother to see after the necessary arrangements for the long journey. Immediately upon the departure of my brother with his fair charge, the old lady turned resolutely to me, and stated, to my heart-stirring surprise, that her present journey to Cornwall was secretly intended by her to serve a particular purpose she had in view, in which I was closely concerned.

"I am doing this, sir," she said, with great impressiveness, "all for your sake. I have often said I should never travel by railway," she went on to remark, with increased solemnity of manner; "now I am setting my own word at naught, all for your sake."

"I certainly do not deserve a tithe of your goodness," I murmured, feeling altogether taken aback.

"Well, well," she said, hastily, "I hope you will try to deserve it. And your chance will come soon," she added, with a significant nod, "for I shall presently write you, asking you to come on to Cornwall to spend a day or two at my place, and to attend upon Emily and me on our journey back to London."

I bowed, in token of deference to my

staunch old friend, and then, with my mind in a tumult, I quitted the carriage, and assisted her to her seat in the railway train.

I shook hands with Emily, bidding her good-bye, and, as I looked into her eyes, I felt affected towards her as I had never felt before. I lingered, with her hand in mine, and, looking now into her face, I beheld her sweet features twitching from the emotion of the moment.

“Good-bye, Frank,” she said, with gentle voice. “We shall not see each other again for perhaps a month.”

“Oh, but—” said I, intending to state that I should likely come on to her at Cornwall, when I was checked by an admonishing tap on my arm from the old lady, who was occupying a seat opposite at the carriage window.

I felt quite unhappy on being thus prompted to secrecy by my zealous old friend, for I now entertained the suspicion that she was planning to effect some *grand coup* for the benefit of my unworthy self; and I feared that while she had thought out her plan, with the assistance of such pale lights as her declining powers were able to afford, she had overlooked the consideration of how her self-approved

scheme would appear to others whose lights were still in vigorous glow.

I stepped back confusedly upon the platform, and my brother at once took my place at the carriage window. The time stated for the departure of the train was already past, and bustle and confusion appeared to be the order of the day.

When now I stood contemplating the long train of heavy carriages, standing in readiness to proceed with a Mercury-swiftness afar off, there occurred to my mind the whimsical thought that one of its passengers had been in active independent existence at a time when the parish in which I stood was a country village, and railroads were still in the limbo of future things.

At length the order for departure was passed along the line, when a dense cloud of steam shot upward, and wreathed itself along the overhanging roof of glass; and now words of encouragement were hastily exchanged, and the train started upon its long journey.

My brother stood looking in absorbed mind towards the receding train, until it was lost to view, and as I touched him to recall his attention, he started like one suddenly roused from sleep. Then he heaved a sigh as deep as any

that ever escaped from a love-sick heart, and silently followed me out of the station.

I proceeded direct on to my college, and my brother accompanied me on the way. He began soon to talk over the events of the morning, and grew presently quite exultant, by reason of his assumed success in the way of securing the favour of Miss Ellice. The foolish fellow established finally to his own satisfaction that he had gained his idol's affections; and then nothing less would satisfy him but that I should relinquish my studious intention, and devote the whole day to feasting and rejoicing with him.

In accordance with his submitted programme, we were to begin at once with "a drink," then ride to and from the City for some hours, and smoke all the while, then partake of a rare good dinner, and finally go to the play.

It was certainly a strong cast of temptation which was offered me by my jubilant brother; but I could not accept it, knowing as I did that he was labouring under a delusion created by his own simple vanity. I begged him to pass me over, and seek some other companion to share in his revelry.

"None other will do," he returned, with

somewhat peremptory tone. "I may want to be reminded of some few things that I said to the ladies in the carriage."

I saw my opportunity to release myself from his vexatious solicitation, and I ungenerously took advantage of it, remembering the self-deluded one of his remark anent the widow in Ceylon.

Immediately on this he gave himself up to serious reflection, and after a little while declared that he now accounted himself the greatest fool alive.

I felt pity for him, seeing him so thoroughly dispirited, and I proceeded, with the wisdom of the old serpent, to remark that it might be that the cause of his regret had indeed served to make him appear the more interesting in the eyes of the ladies. Thereupon the simple fellow grew heartened, and again spake hopefully of himself; but forbore any further mention of his proposal for a celebration of his presumed triumph. When we at length arrived at the gates of my college, he wished me good morning, and then pursued his way alone, with his gaze directed upon the ground, as though once more reviewing his position.

There was much in my brother, I thought, to attract a laughing kind of affection; and he

was able, no doubt, to secure friends at every place where he sojourned. I could not, however, think him a man deserving of the undivided attachment of a gentle-hearted woman, for he was, to every evidence, an incorrigible free lover.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN I returned home I was met by Mrs. Ellice, who at once proceeded to administer to me some remarkably severe advice.

She told me plainly that she thought I was going fast down the stream of Acheron, and that if I did not now avail myself of the means held out to me for my deliverance, I should speedily find myself lost for ever. I cannot say I profited by this lady's solemn caution, as she gave it me in a very unfriendly manner; almost indeed as though she regarded the goodly chance she spoke of as a thing to be regretted.

"Miss Magnet is treating you, I should tell you," she said, with marked unfriendliness, "with an indulgence which she certainly has never bestowed upon any one before."

I answered her firmly that I should not say a single word, either of regret or humble promise, while I was convinced that she addressed me in a spirit of bitter ill-will; and

that I should now, with all due respect, request her to leave me alone for the future.

"I am truly sorry," she replied, with cutting severity, "I have ever had anything to do with you." Then she left me; and presently I received word by the servant that she had gone to meet the rector in the City, and should proceed thence to Wandle Parsonage.

I remained indoors for the rest of the day, and at ten o'clock attended personally to the closing up of the house. I sat up reading in my room until nearly midnight, and, in the dead silence that now prevailed, I was startled to hear a strange cracking sound, like that which occasionally proceeds from the joints of a man moving stealthily on tiptoe. I listened intent; but the sounds of my apprehension did not occur again, and I resumed the perusal of my book, attempting to assure myself that the cause of my alarm was due to the lively condition of my nervous system.

Finding it vain to attempt two important duties at once, I addressed myself solely to the task of allaying my suspicious fears. I whistled a lively air, and beat a tattoo upon the table with my fingers; but, not succeeding in my attempt, I took up a candle, and went out into the adjoining passage. There was nothing to

be seen moving, and I proceeded into the hall only to find things in similar condition. I glanced my light up and down, and presently, to my great concern, I discovered that the patent lock of the door had been tampered with, its bolts being unsecured by the pin, and the chain unfastened. Continuing my search, I discovered upon the floor a black shirt-stud, corresponding with those which, I remembered, were worn by the man-servant. I picked it up, and ran precipitately downstairs, to speak with the fellow anent this matter.

There was no light visible through the chinks of the servant's bed-room door; but when I was given admittance into his room, my eyes caught sight of a candle upon a chest of drawers, and I remarked that the grease was in a fluid state around the wick. The fellow appeared partly dressed, and had, evidently, not yet occupied his bed. I immediately made comment on these strange circumstances, and my suspicions of this man's honesty were confirmed on observing a miserable confusion take possession of him, and I was further determined in my suspicion towards him on hearing him utter words which, though somewhat incoherent, sufficiently proved his intimate knowledge of the affair of the disturbance. I was extremely

excited, and had great difficulty in preserving my temper in speaking to him.

I left him abruptly, and ran upstairs to fetch the housekeeper, and was fortunate in being able to procure the attendance of that individual without disturbing the other servants. When I got the housekeeper downstairs, I stated to her the alarming circumstances which had led to my visit to the man-servant, and then I proceeded to relate what I had observed to cause my uneasiness in regard to him. I reserved the mention of the stud until the last, when the suspected one instantly changed colour, and made a most pitiful attempt to explain away the circumstance. Now, the housekeeper, assuming that defiant manner which is always taken on by a humble individual who suddenly resolves to speak out, told that she had noticed a strange man, with a fur cap, speaking in the area with the man-servant during the course of the previous forenoon.

"That man," said he, hastily, "is a groom out of place."

I cautioned the fellow that he would, no doubt, be presently called upon to prove his friend's integrity, and also to account satisfactorily for the suspicious matters which I had

noticed in connexion with himself. I decided then to end the conference, and go through the house on a tour of inspection, and desired the housekeeper to accompany me. The poor woman consented to go with me ; but followed at a respectful distance, quaking the while in mortal dread.

I carefully inspected all the empty rooms, and the result of my inquiry was, that I found everything apparently in its proper place, and all the doors, cupboards, and cases in their usual state. My whole task was accomplished, happily, with a quietness which was successful in avoiding alarm to the servants in their bedrooms. I now tendered my thanks to my timid companion, and obtained her ready consent to proceed with me again to the man's room. I felt perplexed to think what course I should adopt towards the man-servant ; but when now I returned to his room I discovered that he had found the place no longer suitable to his liking, and had taken himself off. I consulted with the housekeeper as to what measures we should adopt under the circumstances, and I found I had a very shrewd adviser in this worthy woman. She offered the very sensible counsel that, seeing there was no proof that the house had been actually

visited by any unlawful intruders, she thought I should take no action in the matter until the morning, when I should send a telegram to Mr. Ellice, requesting his immediate attendance. I resolved to adopt her advice, and now I dismissed her back to her bed-chamber, and went myself to my couch.

Mr. Ellice promptly made his appearance after I had sent him an urgent message by wire. He was greatly surprised on his arrival to find everything in its ordinary state; as he had conceived, from the peremptory nature of the message, that the house had caught fire. I repeated to him an account of all the disturbing events which had taken place in the night; and he at first was disposed, I am afraid, to regret that I had not imitated the commendable example of the butler.

"The fact is, Frank," he said, with voice of slight reproach, though with a kindly smile, "there have of late occurred so many police cases in which you have been somehow associated, that it must now be the general opinion that you are aspiring to come out as a second Fouché."

I was already secretly convinced in the discomforting opinion that the police functionaries, to hear of yet another case of evil character in

which I figured, would regard me as one who ought to be enrolled incontinently in their own ranks.

The worthy rector proceeded to Scotland Yard, taking me with him, and there made a report of the suspicious events happening in his relative's house.

On our return to Eaton Place he remembered, opportunely, an honest, strong man, residing then at Croydon, who had followed the colours in the days of his youth, and had been lately in the service of the family to which my old acquaintance, Miss White, belonged. "The very man we want here," he declared, preparing to go forth in search of this treasure of a man. Then, after giving some instructions to the housekeeper, and commending her conduct, he went on his way back to the Rectory, and I accompanied him as far as the railway-station.

Shortly after I returned home, I was visited by my former acquaintances—the detectives; when I was subjected by them to a very tantalizing series of questions: whether I had consumed strong liquor on the previous evening; whether I was provided with a witness to prove that I had actually fastened the street-doors with my own hands; whether I did not

myself possess a pair of black studs ; and a great many other queries of impertinent nature. I passed through my ordeal with satisfaction to myself ; and when I say so much, I say what amounts, I believe, to a great deal.

The official inquisitors, on completing their inspection, spoke together for a short time in low, muttered accents, after the manner of soldiers when changing guard ; and, I am afraid, to a purpose meant only to lend an air of mystery to the matter. Then, with a manner of great knowingness, they took themselves away.

The man spoken of by Mr. Ellice arrived in the evening, and announced his readiness to enter upon his duties at once. The rector had certainly made a good choice in selecting this man to take charge of Miss Magnet's threatened house ; but the reverend gentleman had evidently stretched a point in preferring this ex-soldier to fill the vacant post, as the humble individual in question was sadly addicted to the use of certain parts of speech which are not in the mass.

He had brought a cavalry sword with him, and appeared just the man who might be expected to hit out first, and reflect afterwards. I felt assured that the house was safe

while under the guardianship of this resolute man, and I dismissed him about his duties with a sense of relief in my mind.

The next morning brought a message to me stirring my heart to its inmost depths, being in the form of a short note from the hand of my siren, bidding me repair to her presence at the hotel in Soho without delay. I perceived it was totally out of the question that I should try to resist compliance with the mandates of my idol; for, indeed, I had already yielded too far to her fascinating influences to be able to shake off my bonds at will. I should say, judging from my own experience, that a wine-bibber—nay, even an opium-eater—may resist his powerful temptation with greater ease than is possible for the love-bound one to withhold obedience to the lightest call of his enslaver.

I did not, after all, regret my passion; for though sometimes I had suffered by it intense pangs, I had also experienced exquisite emotions of joy. It had endowed me with a new power which enabled me to detect a poem in the commonest blossom adorning the wayside, to recognize a perfect harmony in the sighing of the winds.

While I walked on my way towards the habitation of my genius, I felt my spirit thrill-

ing with a wondrous rapture. I looked upon the refulgent clouds, and thanked Heaven for ordaining that these vaporous masses, in generous addition to their uses in the economy of nature, should serve in their scenic capacity to compensate the lonely voyagers who go down to the sea in ships for the want of those various-hued, delightful glories which exist permanently on the dry land. Then I noted the hospital dedicated to the patron saint of England, and I rejoiced to think there exists such excellent evidence to prove that men are naturally well affected at heart to each other.

At length I arrived at my goal, and, entering its dingy little vestibule, I was immediately confronted by a cadaverous Frenchman, who bowed to me deferentially, and then made the inquiry, "If monsieur had the desire to partake of *déjeuner à la fourchette*?" I returned answer that I had the desire merely to see Mademoiselle Melrose; whereupon the sickly-looking servitor, in his peculiar idiom, stated that "Mademoiselle does not receive to-day."

I handed my card, saying that I believed she probably would receive me.

The waiter first scrutinized me from head to foot, and then turned to the light and read—or pretended to read—my name on the card. "I

will go see," he uttered, after thinking over the matter for a few seconds.

The result of his inquiry proved in my favour, for I was presently conducted into the presence of the fair young actress.

The room occupied by her was a small one, situated at the back of the house, and was but very imperfectly lighted; the furniture was unmistakably of foreign manufacture, and, although somewhat faded, there was yet an appearance of richness in each article. Heavy damask curtains hung over the doors. The chairs were of dark cedar, inlaid with a crest, with their seats covered with embossed velvet. The carpet was both thick and soft, and was bordered with a deep fringe. The whole had evidently once belonged to some one of the old *noblesse* of France.

The fair inhabitant of this quaint room rose gracefully to receive me, and positively charmed me by her increased attractiveness of manner.

Indeed I was at this time charmed in nearly all my senses; my ears were enchanted with the music of her voice; and as I took her fair hand, a delicate perfume, emanating from her person, delighted my olfactory nerves; and then the contact of her hand was potent to send a pleasurable thrill through all my being.

I was distressed to notice that she was much paler than usual, and that a strange, anxious expression had settled upon her brow. Her present toilette was one of *déshabillé*, her robe being of the pattern known by name of domino, and was of a pale blue tint. Her hair hung loose about her shoulders, and its golden hue contrasted admirably with the azure dress. Then her feet were encased in dainty, bright-blue slippers, worked all over with arabesque scrolls in thread of silver. She wore no ornament but a blush rose-bud, flanked by some fresh, green leaves, which occupied a place of high honour—her bosom.

I was, I need scarcely declare, enraptured on now being admitted again to the favouring presence of my divinity, and my bondage seemed no longer oppressive, but entirely delightful.

“I have asked you here, my dear friend,” she said, tremulously, after exchanging a cordial greeting with me, “to bid you good-bye.”

Just Heaven! what a cruel shock was sustained by me at that moment! I felt as though I had received a mortal stroke, and reeled a few paces backwards with a sudden pang in my heart. I impulsively entertained the awful

thought that this idol of my soul was impressed by the presentiment of her speedy dissolution.

“Oh, I do not mean I am expecting to leave the world,” she said, hastily, intelligently divining my dread apprehension. Then, with changed voice of impatience, she added,—“I only contemplate leaving the old world for the new.”

“Leaving the old world for the new?”

“Sit down, and I shall explain the matter,” she said, with a commanding wave of her hand.

I obeyed her, relieved in my mind to learn that my terrible thought was groundless. Yet there remained with me the unquieting apprehension that our total separation was now imminent.

She herself was evidently disturbed in mind, for almost as soon as she began to make her explanation she was obliged to pause, and take a little walk to overcome her weakness.

“I am still an invalid, you see,” she said, with a bewitching smile, on regaining her composure. Then, with true feminine forethought, she took up her fan, in order, as it appeared, to screen her countenance with it in the event of a recurrence of her agitation, and

went on to say that her medical adviser had recommended a change, and that she soon afterwards was fortunate in being offered an engagement at one of the principal theatres of New York. "I have accepted it," concluded she, abruptly, administering to me, in the impulse of the moment, a smart tap with her fan, "and mamma and I sail from Liverpool on the fourth day after this."

If I had heard then that the fair satellite of the earth was about to disappear, never again to be seen from here, I should not, I verily believe, have been more afflicted than I was on hearing that the fair, animated object of my worship was about to be distantly removed from me, probably for ever.

"Must you go?" I inquired, with a spasmodic gasp, staring at her with anxious eyes.

"Yes, indeed," she answered, from the back of her fan.

"I should have thought," I said, desperately catching at the case of her uncle as a means for influencing her to remain in England, "you would not have cared to leave London yet awhile."

"I know what you mean," she answered, with a touch of scorn in her voice, after a short pause of reflection. Then, dropping her fan,

she stared at me with unfriendly expression, and added,—“You refer to my uncle. But pray do not presume to hint things to me, for I shall quarrel with you if you do.”

“Pardon me.”

“Cela dépend.”

I now spoke out plainly, saying that, though thoroughly disliking the individual in question, I yet felt compassion for him in his present position. But while I referred to the sad case of this man, I was truly more interested in my present companion than in her uncle.

“Well, well, let that pass,” she said, in petulant tone; and then, reassuming her manner of friendly regard, she proceeded to say that she perceived I was well informed with respect to her uncle’s case.

I answered that I knew nothing whatever of her uncle’s case; whereupon she looked at me, with her lovely eyes half closed, as though she suspected my perfect sincerity. I felt annoyed at being thus doubted in my word, and I repeated my assertion deliberately.

“Is it possible,” she exclaimed, with wondering surprise, “that you have not heard that your friend has engaged one of his people to defend my poor uncle?”

"My friend?"

"Yes, Mr. Spinner, you know."

Now this was very strange news to me, and I marvelled to think that Spinner had lent his interests and influence to a cause which was, according to his own stated opinion, unworthy of support.

I inquired as to what means had been employed to induce Spinner to yield his favour to the Captain's cause, when my fair companion, to my increased amazement, informed me that the young advocate had given his favour apparently of his own accord.

I had now arrived at such a pitch of astonishment that I became altogether bewildered in my thoughts, and sat staring vacantly, with my mental speculations dissipating themselves almost immediately at birth.

My gentle companion recalled me to consciousness, saying she had not once seen Spinner, or heard from him directly, since the night when the calamitous shock had been given her.

"Mamma has had the management of everything," she explained, with her lips quivering, and her eyes bedimmed with tears, "entirely to herself from the time—you know, until now."

I said generously that I would beg to be allowed the privilege of giving some means of help for the present case of my two fair friends, when my companion, evidently comprehending my precise meaning, hastened to tell me that the lease of the little cottage at Chelsea had been disposed of, together with all its fittings and furniture.

I could not imagine that the money realized from the sale of the cottage and its contents would amount to other than a trifling sum, and now, being keenly anxious to contribute what means of assistance I could give, I delicately asked her if I might be allowed to offer her mother a small loan.

“You have already had your answer upon that subject,” answered the proud young beauty, with a shade of displeasure darkening her brow. Then she looked curiously at me, and presently inquired why it was that I persisted in offering pecuniary benefit to her mother and her, when I was informed that they did not want it.

I felt miserably abashed on being now called upon to explain my impulsive offer, for I could not possibly supply any good explanation in the matter. My tyrant, I believe, perfectly comprehended the difficulty of my position,

and felt a pleasure in forcing my torture to a climax. I now, with hesitation, said, candidly, that I had considered the many expenses which she and her mother were incurring, and remembering that Spinner had been permitted to devote his time and professional skill to their benefit, I had ventured to offer my assistance in the only way likely to prove of value.

"You are a good fellow, I believe," she said, with sudden deep emotion, and hiding her fair face again from me with her fan. Then, laying her hand gently upon my arm, still keeping her countenance concealed, she added, impressively,—*"I will not quarrel with you for your unwelcome offer, but only caution you not to repeat it. And I don't mind telling you that we people of the theatres help one another."*

"Why, then, do you accept Spinner's help?" I said, unable to control my jealous regard in the matter.

"Does he say I have accepted his help?" she passionately inquired, throwing down her fan upon the floor; and now, in her former mild eyes flashed strange lights, and her delicate, small hands were clenched so tightly that their veins stood out prominently upon them.

"I have said I have not heard a word from him on the subject."

"Well, then," said the inflamed young beauty, with impulsive vehemence, "I will inform you upon the subject. Your friend offered his favour without having heard from mamma or me since that night—you know, and then my uncle was glad to accept it; and mamma thought that Mr. Spinner would perhaps take a greater interest in poor uncle's case than would a solicited advocate. But he shall be paid all the same," she added, with a haughty intonation, "for I have arranged with mamma that, as soon as I have run my engagement in America, I shall send for his bill, and settle it to the last penny. No fear!"

"I am afraid," said I, with a portentous shake of my head, "you do not know Spinner yet."

"Oh, I know enough of him," she cried, with accents almost of defiance, making an impatient gesture, "to make sure that he can lord it over you, and is able to do the same over mamma. He would like, I know, to include me also in the list of his vassals, but that will never, never come to pass. I cannot imagine myself," she added, with a short,

scornful laugh, "playing the part of a Lilliputian to his Gulliver."

"Surely you mistake his feelings towards you," I said, disturbed to hear my companion express her opinion of Spinner's sentiments towards herself in terms agreeing with my own secret thoughts.

"I know I do not mistake him," she asserted, positively, tapping the floor impatiently with her foot. "But it matters very little about that," she continued, with changed, sadly thoughtful voice, and nodding her beautiful head, with a strange bitter smile upon her lips, "for I am going away over the wide seas, and may never return."

"You will write to me; won't you?" I asked, anguished to reflect that all my mental throes and worldly sacrifices had gained for me no greater advantage than that of being able to ask my enslaver to give me a friendly word by her own hand after she had gone far away from me.

"Most willingly," she answered, readily, causing my heart suddenly to bound with delight.

With pitiable shortsightedness I yearned to enjoy her charming company as often as I might during the three next precious days,

and I now craved her to indulge me in my anxious desire.

"No, Mr. Amor; no, no," she quickly replied, with something, as it sounded, of compassion in her tone. "It would do no good to either of us: you must not try to see me again before I leave England. If you do I shall certainly feel annoyed, and probably may not write to you from America. Now wish me good-bye," she continued, with emotion, rising nervously from her seat, and supporting herself with her hand upon the back of the chair. "Wish me a good voyage, and success, and all the rest of it," she said, trying to appear merry; but evidently finding her effort very difficult. "Mind you, Mr. Amor, I am expecting to do great things in Yankeeland, for I am engaged to play leading characters. Oh, I dare say I shall be all right by-and-by."

"You cannot fail to succeed, with the brave spirit you have."

"Cannot I?" she said, with a pleased smile and a slight blush. "I am glad to hear that. Now let us say good-bye," she added, abruptly, holding forth her shaking hand, "for surely this is the right moment to do it."

A rush of tender feeling at this supreme moment arose in my heart, depriving me of the

power of utterance. In silent agony I pressed, as I thought, for the last time, the shapely, soft, warm hand of the beautiful being who had been to me even as a revelation from Heaven.

She drooped her eyes beneath my deeply earnest gaze, and held her under lip between her teeth, as though she felt the emotion of the moment threatening to overcome her self-command, and was striving hard to stay its mastery.

"Farewell!" I gasped, feeling terribly sick at heart.

"Au revoir!" she murmured, almost in a whisper. Then as our hands closed tightly together in a mutually intended last pressure, the *portière* at the doorway was pushed aside, and in walked the mother.

"Qui est là?" exclaimed the unwelcome new-comer, unable, as it seemed, to distinguish me in the twilight of the apartment.

The maiden drew her hand away with a nervous start, and, turning to her mother, gently upbraided her for coming in upon her with silent footsteps.

The Frenchwoman replied, in her own language, that she had, indeed, given notice of her approach, both with her voice and her steps;

yet though she spake now with resentful voice, it was plainly evident she regarded her proud daughter with a respectful fear.

"How have things gone on to-day?" inquired the maiden, with eager interest.

"The Capitaine," answered the French-woman, quickly, using now her hybrid language, doubtless in my honour, as she must have considered that I should thus be enabled to understand her present communication, "il est remand to-day."

I immediately comprehended from her odd statement that the Captain had been brought up on this day for examination, and a remand of his case had been ordered; and that his poor adherent had attended at the court.

I felt decidedly unwilling to take part in any discussion upon the Captain's prospects; and when I caught the maiden's eye, I made a sign to her expressive of my wish now to take my final leave.

"Not just yet, please," she said in answer; and then turning again to her mother, with the eagerness of a devoted partisan, she inquired what were the supposed prospects of their unfortunate protector.

"Excellent!" replied the little woman, with animated gesture. "But I have grand noos.

Vat you think, ma fille ? Monsieur Spinner, he say to me, he go to Amerique vit us."

"Spinner! Spinner!" exclaimed the girl, with sudden vehement impatience, "toujours Spinner! Well, mamma," she added, emphatically, "I shall not go to America in the same ship with that man."

"Oh, ma chère," said the mother, with a sad shake of her head. "Ve must go as arrangt. Nous n'avons pas beaucoup d'argent."

"Oh, peste!" uttered the girl between her clenched teeth, moving with ungovernable impatience to and fro. She seemed now violently excited, and continued to walk about in a raging temper for some time.

Suddenly she stopped, and looked at me with her eyes lighted up with a strange triumphant expression, and then walking close up to me, asked what I thought of my friend Spinner's proposal.

"I am utterly astonished at it," I answered, moodily.

"Then," cried my fair tyrant, impulsively seizing my hand, and looking me very earnestly in the face, "you must astonish him in turn."

"How?"

"By accompanying mother and me to New York."

"What! I go to New York?"

"Your friend will go. Why not you?"

I was now utterly dismayed, and stood looking at the boldly proposing one without answering a word.

Observing my trepidation, she proceeded, with the art of her sex, to remind me of my assertion, that I was willing to lend whatever was in my power to benefit her and her mother. "Lend us your company to New York," she concluded, with decisive voice. "The matter will cost you only some fifty pounds, and a month's absence from home."

"Pray do not ask me to do this thing," I pleaded, almost stupefied by conflicting painful thought.

"Then, you will benefit your health," pursued the enchantress, with determined voice, and still retaining my hand, "and also see things which you have not seen yet."

"I cannot possibly do what you now ask of me."

"That is, you have not the courage to do it," said she, with accents of cold contempt; throwing my hand from her, and bestowing a look of anger upon me. "You are very different from your friend, it would seem."

"Spinner may not go, after all," I remarked, scarce knowing what I said.

"If you can persuade him to that effect," said the imperious young beauty, with a taunting laugh, "you will have my thanks."

"If I find," said I, driven to desperation by the terrible thought that my idol now considered me deficient in chivalrous spirit, "that Spinner has decided upon going with you, I shall go too."

"Now you are once more my true friend," cried the siren, with her eyes sparkling with lively satisfaction. Then she again took my hand, and shook it warmly. Alas! she could not fully comprehend the extent of the sacrifice which I was about to make for her sweet sake.

"Vy he go vit us?" wonderingly inquired the mother.

"Why should Mr. Spinner go with us?" returned the arrogant fair one.

"Monsieur Spinner has ze desire," remarked the mother, sententiously; "cet Monsieur has not ze desire."

"Monsieur Spinner is presumptuous," said the girl, promptly, with flashing eyes. "This gentleman is chivalrous."

The little Frenchwoman shrugged her shoulders and made a curious grimace, but offered no further remark upon the subject.

Then the self-willed girl turned to me, and intimated her desire that I should acquaint her as early as possible with the result of my inquiry as to whether Spinner was really intending to carry out his startling declaration.

Now I took my leave, and my siren did me the honour of accompanying me to the door, and presenting me, as the word of adieu passed between us, with the rosebud which had lain upon her bosom.

I passed out of the enchanted temple, and after I had walked for a little while in the open air I began to realize the serious nature of the conditions which I had bound myself to. I saw that, in the event of my proceeding with the young actress and her mother to America, I should be placed under the necessity of remaining in the New World, and also of earning my livelihood in the readiest way I could find available. Also, I perceived that I had offered a sacrifice of my entire good prospects, and of my existing chances of happiness to the honour of a fair being who was obstinately unwilling to bestow upon me any higher favour than a mere share of her capricious friendship. I knew that it would surely be vain for me to hope for her love, if I were embarked in an enterprise entailing upon me

the necessity of earning my bread under hard conditions. Yet, while now I apprehended that terrible conditions must be incurred by me in the redeeming of my promise, I disdained to entertain the least thought of compromise. My compelling idol was not blamable in the least in the matter, thought I: the blame was attributable to myself entirely.

I looked fondly upon my rosebud, and kissed it, and also inhaled its delicate odour. I regarded it as a gift of rare value, for I remembered it was the chosen flower of love, and it had once rested upon the bosom of my sweet divinity.

I reached home, and was immediately informed that a man had been for some time waiting for me; and I was given a letter. This letter was, to my great surprise, from Spinner, and ran as follows:—

“Old Bailey, 8th inst.

“DEAR SIR,—Desirous of change, I was casting about my divining rods to discover whither my propitious fates would direct my steps, when I received the intelligence that a certain young priestess of Momus, together with her mamma, had engaged to sail, on the morning of the 12th inst., from Liverpool, by the S. S. Sea-bride, bound for Manhattan City,

New England. Whereupon I concluded to cross the Atlantic also, for the pleasure of the trip.

“Yours till death,
“J. S.”

I was prepared for this strange news, but I had certainly not expected to get by Spinner's own hand the decisive announcement of his speedy departure to New York by the same ship which would carry the fair Eve Melrose. I sat for some minutes with the disquieting letter in my hand, trying to determine what motive was influencing my quondam friend in taking this long and hazardous voyage in company with the young actress and her mother, whom he had often referred to in any but respectful terms. I was disposed to think that he had no particular motive whatever for his extraordinary step, but was influenced only by the same whimsical spirit that had caused him to visit many desolate parts of the European continent. I certainly regretted his present eccentric resolution, though I had extracted a little comfort from the reflection that it would afford a certain triumph to the exemplary young actress.

My mind always abhorred anything in the

way of a surprise, and now, seeing myself committed to attend upon my enchantress during her voyage to America, I despatched a note to Spinner, acknowledging his communication, and informing him of my own intention.

Proceeding now to see my visitor, I found him to be the American theatrical agent. He was smoking a remarkably full-flavoured cigar, which he was unmannerly enough to retain in his mouth while speaking with me. He immediately intimated to me that he had called upon the subject of my play, and was now willing to treat upon the question of bringing it on the stage. I was pleased to hear this news, and, with simplicity, took for granted that the only remaining arrangements in the matter would be to make copies for the *dramatis personæ*, and settle with the manager as to my terms of remuneration.

"It won't do as it is," said the agent, with a deprecativè shake of his head. "It will have to be put straight by some one who knows the stage."

"Then it would not be my play!" said I, greatly disconcerted by the strange announcement.

"My good friend," remarked the agent, with a smile of pity which caused me much annoy-

ance, "let me advise you, if you go in for another play, to study to hit the public taste, and not your own high-flying fancy."

I saw clearly that this man was only prepared to arrange for the transfer of my dramatic work on the veriest mercenary terms. Now he had utterly mistaken me in thinking that he could persuade me to yield my intellectual production basely to Mammon. I scorned to submit the fruit of my earnest mind to be altered to serve a vulgar show for a few pieces of gold. I was, however, able to see a way in which this man might serve me while I served him. This was, that I should obtain from him a letter to his employer in New York, stating the fact of my having written a commendable play, and that I was willing to subject myself to a practical course of training, in order to be fitted to make some necessary alterations in my work with my own hand.

"Yes, sir," continued the American, after a pause, evidently thinking I was disposed to be ruled by his suggestion. "It is a usual thing for young unknown authors to have their raw performances altered for them into ship-shape order."

I hastened to assure him that I entertained an utter contempt for practice of the kind, and

should certainly never lend my consent to it in my own case. Then I proceeded to state what alternative I was willing to accept.

The Yankee listened attentively to me, with a queer smile playing over his knowing face. "Jerusalem!" he ejaculated, on hearing my proposal; and then, with manner of blank surprise, he went on vulgarly to remark that I had given him a "staggerer."

"Then you think my proposal inadmissible?"

"You are a young gentleman of fortune, I presume?" he said, after a pause.

"No."

"Do you ever expect to make a good living by play-writing?"

"I cannot say yet."

"I can say, right down sure," declared the man of experience, "you never will."

I felt almost stunned for the moment under the crushing force of the ruthless dictum now passed upon the poor hope which had served to sustain me in my extremity, and in my despair I cried out impulsively that I stood committed to certain conditions, entailing upon me the necessity of following some such course as that I had specified for my own adventure.

The American regarded me with an almost

suspicious look, and presently dryly inquired when I intended to depart for New York.

I answered hastily, mentioning the day for my departure, and the name of the ship; whereupon the sharp-witted agent partly closed his eyes, in the manner of one who has hit upon a clue to some interesting mystery, and with assumed carelessness inquired if I was acquainted with a young actress who had engaged to sail in the same vessel.

"Oh dear, yes," I answered, with a bitter smile, forgetful of my proper caution under the strong feeling provoked by the cold inquiry.

"Phew!" whistled the agent, rising from his chair. Then, with a meaning smile, he said, soliloquizingly, "I see it all now."

"All what?"

"Look'ee here, young gentleman," said he, abruptly, gazing at me with concerned air, "I have no objection to give you the note you want; but let me now offer you this little bit of useful advice. Don't commit yourself to a wild-goose chase. You are, I can see, right down smitten with a passion for our new star. Now that sort of thing never pays in the end. I have seen, over and over again, foolish young men—aye, and old men, too—hanging about our stage stars, and I never knew a satellite

escape meeting at some time or other with almighty grief."

I curtly thanked my officious adviser, and then gave him to understand that I was quite determined to proceed upon my hazardous enterprise to America.

"All right!" said he, with the air of one who has performed an ungrateful duty. Then he lighted a fresh cigar, and stolidly took his departure, promising to send me his note by the day's post.

I knew it to be my duty to inform my friends at once of my extraordinary determination, and I concluded to write to the rector and Miss Magnet, and to call upon my brother.

After I had spent nearly an hour in writing my important missives, I found, on re-perusing them, that I could not myself make head or tail of them, and I began to fear I was surely deranged. In desperation I wrote a simple bare statement of the course I had resolved to follow, adding my heartfelt thanks for the unmerited goodness which had been lavished upon me. I copied my missive, making a few alterations, and despatched the two to their respective addresses.

I shall not expatiate at any length upon the visit which I made to my brother, for it was

indeed a very painful one. Enough to say that Edward, under the keen incitement of the subject, showed himself possessed of a grand reserve of rare and excellent parts. In his own rugged, forcible manner, he spoke against my resolved enterprise with such able reasoning, that I was given a degree of punishment sufficient for my offence by the feeling of bitter shame which was awakened within me. He forgot altogether his own interests, in his generous concern for the preservation of mine, and he gave me to understand that he should be willing to benefit me to the fullest extent within his power, if I would only consent to abandon my reckless intention, and continue in my life of comfortable respectability. Finding me inflexible, he asked me to promise him that I should go forth with the determination to conduct myself in a manner which would entitle me at least to some degree of respect.

I pledged my solemn word to him that, come what might, I should be faithful to my honour and proper fortitude. Then the good fellow, though still disapproving of my coming enterprise, bade me remember to write to him from time to time.

They are the wise ones who strictly observe a straight course. I can say, in all sincerity,

that my own transgression from the path of perfect duty brought tribulation to my mind which would require the power of a Dante or Milton to describe. My wrong-doing was not of any aggravated character, considering that I alone was liable to suffer from it, yet my mind was tortured by constant regret and apprehension from the moment when I had pledged my word so recklessly.

My Nestor-like friend, the rector, did not favour me with a visit, but sent me a letter instead. The good man, in his epistle, plainly stated that he considered my present determination to be so utterly outrageous to all the canons of rectitude, that he could no longer regard me as a hopeful subject for advice, and should, therefore, leave me now to be regenerated by an awakened conscience. He made no reference to the inconvenience likely to arise from my leaving England during Miss Magnet's absence, but confined his remarks to a stern, unimpassioned rebuke of my contempt of plain duty. The accusing words seemed to burn in my shrinking sight, as did those flame-written words, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," in the sight of the self-indulgent Belshazzar.

"You will, I fear," were the concluding words of my reverend correspondent, "arrive

at last, like the prodigal son of holy Scripture, to sad abasement. Yet I would bid you remember that, should you ever, in a penitent spirit, yearn to return to your duty, you will always find the gates of mercy open to you."

The series of portentous cautions which I received on the subject of my daring enterprise caused my mind very dismal apprehension at first; but after a while the feeling wore off, and I became almost reconciled to my dark prospects.

I called once more on my uncle's physician, and learned from him that his patient had rallied in a very unexpected manner. He considered, however, that the actual condition of his strange patient was far from satisfactory, and confided to me the intelligence that my uncle, during his last visit, had pestered him with greedy questions concerning the movements of the young actress. I thoughtlessly informed my medical friend that the fair one referred to would probably the next morning be proceeding on her way to New York; and no sooner had I made my gratuitous communication than I regretted it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE momentous day arrived only too quickly, and discovered me packing up such travelling gear as I deemed actually necessary for my dubious enterprise. I had received no communication from my indulgent patroness. Indeed I was glad to be spared that expected bitter trial. I informed the man-servant that I was proceeding to New York, though, of course, I did not say why I was going thither. This man was acquitting himself admirably, and it was vastly comforting to me to know that the post which I was selfishly forsaking would not be left without a trustworthy guardian. I believe that this old warrior shrewdly suspected my motive for leaving my luxurious home to go upon a long, hazardous voyage. He was respectful enough to refrain from putting any question to me anent my object in going off to America at this unseasonable time, but, on an occasion when he had, to my demand for some common pins, brought me some lady's shawl-pins, and I had said they were unsuitable

for my purpose, he calmly advised me to retain them, as probably, said he, they would be found useful at another time.

I left the excellent house wherein I had been treated with unstinted kindness, and now I was able fully to realize the extent of my sacrifice. When I sat in my hired vehicle, looking back at the quickly receding, hospitable home of my friend of friends, my emotion was so great that I could not restrain myself from sobbing.

On my arrival at the railway-station, I was agreeably surprised to find my good-natured brother waiting to see me off, and I felt that this generous act on his part would endear him to my mind for ever.

We paced the platform together for the few minutes pending the departure of the train, when he repeated, with emphasis, his injunction that I must now manfully determine to brave out, for two years at least, whatever hardships might befall me, and not flinch at my first hard trial, and, to use his own expression, then sneak back to my old easy quarters.

"Trust me," I returned, giving my hand to him.

At this moment, the fair one of my devotion

and her mother appeared upon the scene. Edward instantly recognized the maiden, and, on the impulse of his natural gallantry, advanced and addressed to her a few words expressive of his wish that she might enjoy a prosperous voyage.

"You have made a mistake, sir," returned the proud girl, staring upon her accoster, with her fine blue eyes kindled with resentment.

Now Edward, though having, like Ulysses, seen cities and men, and possessing, as he did, a stout heart, was easily daunted by a woman. The poor fellow was almost totally unmanned at the slight rebuff administered to him. "I am," said he, absurdly, pointing to me in an anxious manner, "this gentleman's brother."

It was something for me to congratulate myself upon, that my beauteous idol, immediately on Edward's explanation, tendered him her hand, and summoned a smile in his behalf.

At the last moment, the American agent appeared at the window of the carriage wherein my two charges and I had taken seats. After giving a few hasty instructions to the young actress, he handed me a note, and proceeded, to my great annoyance, to make known to my fair companions that I was the author of the

promising new play, entitled 'Scotland's Queen Mary.'

The train now moved off, and all attention was given to the one duty of leave-taking. My gentle companions, who had known only severe poverty and constant hard work in the great metropolis, sobbed, on leaving the terminus, as though their hearts would break.

I saw my dear brother waving an adieu to me, and, as I signalled back to him, I prayed Heaven to grant him its favour.

When at length the train was moving rapidly upon its way, and the first emotion of the passengers had subsided, the young actress took me to task for my secrecy in the matter of my play. She told me that the agent had mentioned to her that she would probably be entrusted with the leading character in a new play, but had not then stated the name of the author. She went on to say that the present revelation had, indeed, caused her such extreme surprise that it almost took away her breath.

I could plainly perceive that the startling information given her by the agent had already disposed her to depreciate the motive of my present grand act of homage.

The little Frenchwoman proved herself, indeed, a wretched traveller. I was amused to hear her now bemoaning her sad fate in being obliged to leave all her friends, and also her own "*chère maisonnette*," and go to a far-distant, strange land, as I remembered that the people and the place favoured by her present regrets had been, even in my own hearing, cursed by her a dozen times over. The exclamations, "*Parbleu!*" "*Mon Dieu!*" "*O ciel!*" were in very frequent employment by this lively daughter of France while she was upon her hateful journey to Liverpool.

I experienced a keen sense of relief when the trying railway journey was concluded. Without delay I took my two difficult charges on to the ship, and resigned them to the care of the stewardess. Then I proceeded to arrange things for myself. My fellow-passengers were, I quickly observed, in considerable number, and also the ship's crew were in strong force. Everywhere appeared anxious men exercising their muscular power to the fullest possible extent; while a constant din vexed the air, in an intermingling of sounds produced from machinery in motion and the shouts of excited humanity.

The voyage which I was now embarked upon

was my first of any extent, and I felt almost bewildered at my strange situation. I could easily distinguish the raw hands of travel from the veterans among my fellow-passengers; the first being, one and all, nervously anxious of disposition, and also gloomily silent, while the second were, to a man, collected of manner and somewhat obtrusively cheerful. I was fortunate enough to obtain the friendly regard of a seasoned Atlantic voyager, and so managed to make my necessary arrangements in very short time.

The ship was already well down the Mersey when I went again on deck, and as I glanced about, with the instinctive desire to familiarize myself with my new quarters, I presently recognized Spinner, sitting upon a coil of rope at the prow. He was attired in a serviceable-looking long coat, with fur collar and wristbands, and wore a close-fitting cap, with ear-lappets. He was smoking a pipe with a bowl surmounted by a wire top. His every appointment had evidently been well considered, and he appeared, to my curious sight, the very *beau idéal* of a traveller.

I went instantly up to him, and with assumed *sang froid* remarked that I had expected to meet him at the railway-station in London.

With indifferent air he returned that he had left London the previous day.

"You are surprised, perhaps," I said, desirous of breaking at once the restraint existing between us, "to meet me here."

"I am more than surprised," he answered, staring fixedly at me, without removing his pipe from his lips. "I am even sorry, for your sake."

"You will surely admit, in fairness," I said, with difficulty restraining the show of my agitation, "that my present conduct refutes your charge against me."

"My charge against you is one which affects myself equally with you," he replied, with a sudden lowering expression in his keen eyes. "It is that one or other of us should not have been still in the world. Both being here, one should and must speedily quit it."

"I cannot understand you, Spinner."

"Look you, Amor! When I had set my heart on regeneration, and aspired to the hand of a certain fair girl, you thwarted my endeavour."

"That is——"

"Oh, deny it not!" cried my unreasonable accuser, fiercely, holding up his palm to stay my remonstrance. "It is true—no matter in what way."

"Yet, I am here."

"That again is your offence to me," said my sworn enemy, with a cold laugh, "for I had proposed for myself a little diversion, and lo! you forsake all your advantages, that you might mar my holiday."

"Shall I go back with the pilot?" I mockingly inquired.

"It would be well for you to do so," he remarked, shaking his head ominously, with his gaze directed earnestly towards the west—"well for both of us, perhaps."

"Dum vivimus vivamus," I quoted, with that reckless spirit which belongs essentially to vagabondage.

He turned round, amazed to hear me quoting that Latin proverb which would enjoin man to live while he lives, and which is the primal text of Epicurean philosophy.

"O si sic omnia!" he exclaimed, with an accompanying suitable gesture.

My vagabondage had certainly begun very inauspiciously, and I almost regretted that I had not taken prudent counsel with myself ere going down to the deep in company with a man who had conceived me guilty of wrecking his entire hope of happiness.

"What do you require of me?" I asked of

my mysterious enemy, after a pause, feeling unable to bear any longer the suspense occasioned by my ignorance as to what were his intentions towards me. We were in a comparatively secluded spot, and ran but slight risk of attracting notice by our extraordinary manner of conversation.

On my question, my unfriendly companion gave himself up to thought for a minute or two, and then abruptly requested me to sit beside him upon the wreathed cable.

"I will now make an explanation in the matter of our compact," said he, decisively, when I had seated myself as he had requested. "When you wrote me stating that you had decided to join me in this voyage to America, I conceived, and determined upon, a plan to redeem the pledge existing between us. It is this, that you join with me, for a period of twelve months the force employed by the States' Government to wage war upon the intractable Indians of Arizona."

This extraordinary proposal was made by my strange enemy evidently with perfect sincerity, and, though it startled me not a little at first, it was not at all disagreeable to me. I had indeed been laying my account to expect very hard conditions in my forthcoming

striving life, and the thought of engaging myself in a scheme of hardy adventure was certainly not unpalatable. I answered that I should require some reasonable time to consider his proposal; when he said, promptly, that he would give me all the time occupied by our voyage.

“And if I decline your present proposal, what then?”

“That question I shall answer at its proper time.”

“And again,” said I, anxious to know the conditions to be attached in the event of my consenting to serve the specified cause in company with him, “if I consent to your proposal, do you mean to be friendly again with me?”

“Yes; as far as ever I can be,” he replied, reluctantly, but with evident honesty of intention. “And I think,” he added, with hard, cold voice, as he relit his pipe, “all is now said that need be said on the subject for the present.”

I rose and walked away from my stern companion, and, resting my arms upon the ship's gunwale, gave myself up to serious reflection. It would be, I thought, very humiliating for me to play the part of a “utility man” at the same theatre wherein my enchantress would

occupy a position of first rank. Now Spinner's proposal for the settlement of our grave engagement presented rather an alluring aspect, for it afforded a way for me even to gain some honourable respect from my friends; and at the same time would enable me to do good service to the law-loving side of general humanity. Of course, I had acted very foolishly in coming here at all; but, even while I acknowledged so much to myself, I could not regret my conduct, for I knew that, if I had refused obedience to the arbitrary command of my tyrant, I should have drawn her contempt down upon my head, and life under that condition would certainly have been very miserable for me. It is all very well for the heart-whole man to sneer at the ecstasies of love, but the *et* nevertheless remains, that a lover simply cannot help himself in the way of reasonable conduct. It will afford a striking illustration of the extent of sacrifice which man is capable of making for love's sake, to cite the well-known case of the very first man of the world; and when that particular case is taken into account, there surely can be but little surprise excited by any other foolish case of the kind.

While I thus communed within myself, my gaze was directed upon the shifting heavens,

and suddenly I was struck by the resemblance which was at this moment presented by a cumulus cloud, strangely enough, to the facial outline of the redoubtable Captain Melrose; and I impulsively called Spinner's attention to this curious apparition. The young advocate stared at it, and smiled; and presently, with his old cynical manner, remarked that the sky had, by its present performance, rendered it impossible for him any longer to regard it as an emblem of purity.

I seized my opportunity to annoy my companion, and remarked to him, with an assumed reproachful voice, that I was surprised to hear him speak disparagingly, in an inferential sense, of his own client. I could detect a shade of displeasure pass over his face when I addressed to him my caustic remark; and he betrayed his annoyance still further by his act of smoking his pipe with sudden hasty manner.

"The man is no client of mine," he said, gazing, with apparent intentness, at the interesting cloud.

Adopting a tone of carelessness, I remarked that I had heard he had taken considerable interest in the Captain's case, and I had, therefore, concluded that he had taken its conduct into his own hands.

"I know that you desire to twit me," he returned, resentfully, directing his eyes searchingly upon me, "for the inconsistency apparently existing betwixt my word and my deed in respect to this case of the man Melrose." Then, after a short pause, with evident sudden intention, he went on to state that when he had succeeded in inducing the Captain's niece to break away from her marital engagement, he had seen, after thinking the matter over, that he had also succeeded in depriving the poor girl of all chance of obtaining means for the succour of her unfortunate relative, and that then he had conceived it his plain duty to engage counsel for the luckless Captain entirely at his own expense.

"It is, no doubt, very good of you," said I, with a slight, mocking laugh, "to act in direct offence to your own feelings in order to gratify the misdirected kind desire of a pretty, young girl."

"I am glad you think so, very glad."

"I wonder what the Captain thinks of it all."

"The Captain, I am able to inform you, continues faithful to his precious compact with your uncle."

"He will now find himself outwitted," I remarked, with a forced smile, feeling almost

sick at heart to reflect that I myself stood in great danger of encountering a similar experience.

"The Captain is not so easily outwitted as you would fain suppose," said Spinner, with intonation of voice indicating his knowledge of some secret proceedings likely to cause me some trouble. "The Captain, though in durance vile, is yet able to assist your uncle's game to considerable purpose."

"In what way?"

"Come and see," he answered, abruptly, rising to his feet, and knocking the ashes out of his pipe. Then, bidding me accompany him to the second cabin, he walked off in that direction. I immediately followed him, speculating within myself what possible agent for my direct disturbance there could be in this small floating world that I had not seen already.

Many of the passengers were now out on deck, and the general interest was devoted tenderly to the land which had been but a hard mother to the greater number of these emigrants. The scene was altogether an affecting one, and I felt my sensitive heart swell with tender emotion, as I perceived that every face was bedewed with tears.

Spinner, with unconcern at the saddening scene around him, stalked up to a man who was resting upon the gunwale, looking away towards the panoramic shore, and touched him on his shoulder. The man turned round, with a nervous start, when, to my intensely disagreeable surprise, I found myself now once again standing face to face with my uncle's villainous vizier.

The unexpected appearance of this abominable creature on the instant startled me exceedingly, and I felt my heart sink within me. But, presently recovering my fortitude, with instinctive feeling I advanced towards him to set my mark upon him, and only Spinner's intervention prevented the execution of my stern purpose.

The hateful dwarf, in his resentment, grinned at me just like some furious orang-outang, and sought to keep alive my exasperation by action of pointing to his own person, thus to impress my consciousness of his unwelcome presence.

"It is sorely disquieting," said Spinner, with loud voice, addressing the evil-looking one, "to find you here—Jonah!"

The various passengers in the vicinity, on hearing Spinner's strange term, immediately

turned round, with evident alarm, to note which one of their number had been accosted by a name invested with maleficent association.

When now I beheld the faces of the disturbed voyagers all frowning upon the misshapen wretch who had been given the ominous title of Jonah, I perceived Spinner's intention in speaking as he had done. I entertained the opinion that Stoa during his voyage in all likelihood would have, to use an Americanism, "a bad time of it."

I felt miserable to reflect that I should have, during all the time of my voyage, and perhaps for the whole time which I might pass in America, the company of the particular one whom I detested the most of all my unscrupulous foes. I had partly comforted myself with the assurance that my expatriation, while not attended with a cheering prospect, would at least afford the benefit of a formidable ocean standing between me and my malignant enemies; and I was now pained at heart to find that my familiar evil star was still in the ascendant.

Spinner said nothing further to my uncle's villain, but quietly asked me to accompany him back to our former secluded position. Then he walked off, and I followed him.

When we were again sitting together on the coil of rope, I inquired of him how long he had known that my uncle's spy was accompanying us. He answered that he had first known of his presence in the ship at the time of his coming aboard.

"He can surely do nothing alone," I said, confident that the hateful hireling would be almost powerless to act in a strange land three thousand miles distant from his employers.

"He has already lived in America," said Spinner, with peculiar emphasis.

"Oh, indeed! But what of that?"

"I think that you may find," remarked my companion, with a significant nod, lighting some fresh tobacco, "that it amounts to something."

"He must accompany us, then, to Arizona," I said with a little laugh, forgetful of my caution in the impulse of the moment.

Spinner glanced quickly at me when I thus incautiously revealed my mind with regard to the stern proposal he had made me, and a meaning smile stole over his countenance. I felt vexed to think that I had been so incautious as to betray my mind thus precipitately, and with intent to soothe my secretly irritated feelings I lighted a cigar—having lately joined

the devotees of the mighty weed—and sat smoking in silence, looking out to sea. Spinner also observed silence; and presently we each became absorbed in reverie.

While I was in the midst of my day-dream, my attention was suddenly recalled by the administration of a smart tap upon my shoulder, and as I turned round I beheld the charming young actress standing at my side, looking down upon me with an arch smile on her fair countenance.

Spinner arose with me from our improvised smoking lounge, and we simultaneously did courtesy to our welcome visitor. I observed that she returned the advocate's salute with a constrained cold manner; and that her countenance wore a troubled expression as she turned from him and gazed away out to sea, shielding her eyes with her outspread palm.

"How long must we endure our present life?" she said, after a pause, addressing, as it seemed, Spinner or me indifferently.

"Ten days, I believe," I answered.

"I hope your opinion will prove correct," said the young beauty, maintaining her anxious gaze. "A lady in the cabin says she believes our voyage will occupy twelve days."

"That lady's prophecy," remarked Spinner,

with a confident voice, "will prove, I believe, the correct one."

"Why do you believe so?" demanded the fair girl, facing round upon Spinner with instinctive displeasure.

"Because," explained the experienced one in maritime affairs, "our ship is heavily laden, and is in herself a slow craft."

"And yet, knowing that much, you selected it for your own passage?"

"She will quite answer my purpose."

"Is it not your purpose, as mine and others', to reach America as quickly as may be?"

"Nay, I would prefer delay, for my chief purpose is to woo the glorious charms of old ocean."

"Good heavens! what a taste!" exclaimed the astonished girl, with an involuntary shudder, after the manner of her mother.

Spinner smiled grimly to himself on hearing the ejaculatory criticism passed upon his motive for going down to the deep.

"You cannot surely mean that you like this sort of thing?" said the maiden, with voice expressive of her desire that Spinner would recant his declared sympathy for "life on the ocean wave."

"I do like it—much," he answered promptly, smiling upon his astonished interrogator.

"Oh, good heavens!" she again ejaculated, lifting up her hands and making a grimace. Then she turned upon her heel and walked off, almost offended.

She passed over to a position where she was still in our view, and presently she posed herself in order to look steadily through a telescope which some admirer had lent her; when the statuesque attitude she assumed, with the adventitious backward disposal of her dress by the wind, caused her to appear an exquisite presentment of a genius of grace.

"She is certainly very charming," murmured Spinner, lost in admiration at the beauty-expressing figure of the young actress.

I now rejoined the attractive company of my fair arbitress, when I informed her that my uncle's creature was present with us in the ship. She was much agitated on hearing this news, and insisted that I should take her to the man in question, in order to subject him to an examination. I knew it was quite hopeless to try and persuade her against going to see the man; but I exercised my utmost power of argument to influence her to refrain from speaking with him, and my effort was happily crowned with success.

When at length she was convinced by ocular

demonstration that a spy was dogging her heels, I repeated to her what Spinner had said with regard to her uncle's share in the matter, and I presently saw reason to believe that the faithful girl's mind was thereby shaken in its former allegiance.

The wind blew fresh and strong, and the vessel began to pitch. The air was beautifully bright and exhilarating, and the saline flavour of the sea was now plainly perceptible. Stately great ships, and innumerable small light craft, went bounding past us homeward and outward; and the shore, already far off, was beginning to show a desolate aspect.

I greatly enjoyed the cheery prospect from the bulwarks of the Sea-bride, and my fair companion was also much interested in the changeful scene. We now observed that many of our fellow-passengers were seized with seasickness, and we each expressed the infirm hope that we should escape that miserable experience.

Alas! our hope proved utterly delusive, for my companion was taken unwell very shortly after she had expressed her anxious trust, and I had no sooner parted with her at the door of her cabin than I felt myself seized with the prevailing malady. I then retired within my

own cabin, and my sufferings extended at intervals during the following three days. Occasionally I crept on deck during that memorable period; but I was so enervated by my illness, and so depressed in tone from lack of sustenance, that I was quite unable to take interest in anything whatever. I was simply alive, and no more.

"We are going to have dirty weather," remarked Spinner to me on the fifth day of our voyage, when I had managed to climb up the ladder to the poop.

I had now completely recovered from positive sickness, but was much enfeebled, and almost deprived of fortitude. The weather of the last three days had, in my opinion, been downright unpleasant; and, in my inexperienced mind, I had conceived the idea that any atmospheric change must surely be in the way of improvement. The prognostication of my weather-wise companion was highly disagreeable to my feelings, as I had been calculating that most of the passengers, probably, by this time, would be in possession of "sea legs," and I was looking forward to a season of enjoyment.

We were now in the open sea, and the wind, blowing a gale, had stirred the waves up to a

mountainous height. The sky appeared grey and sullen, and ugly black clouds wreathed themselves up from the horizon.

"Yes," said Spinner, thoughtfully, as he scanned the sable clouds heaving up upon the sea verge, like murky smoke ascending from some hidden pit, "we shall have, I fear, a hurricane by-and-by."

There was an undefinable expression on both sea and sky, as of a merciless scowl, and the ship seemed, I imagined, to pursue her way with trepidation. All hands appeared to be on deck at this time, and apprehension of a speedily coming storm existed evidently in the minds of the navigators, as every one of the officers was at his post, while the seamen were in numbers up aloft, furling sails, and securing them fast to the yards.

Spinner, who was well acquainted with ship business, explained to me that the present operations did not include taking in the lower topsail on the main, the foresail, and the lower topsail on the foremast; and then he went on to say that he was convinced from the fact of the barometer having fallen to 28·25°, that it was decidedly advisable to furl every stitch of the canvas.

I noticed that all the mariners were uneasy

of mind, as each, from time to time, turned his face towards the quarter where the dismal vaporous phenomenon was taking place, and not one spoke cheerfully to his neighbour.

"It comes!" shouted Spinner, with his eyes gazing wildly in the direction of the approaching hurricane; and presently he added the terrifying caution,—“For God’s sake, Amor, hold fast, or you will surely be overboard!”

I promptly seized hold of an iron stanchion near at hand, and, in dire alarm, turned my eyes to behold the giant storm before it reached the ship. I was appalled to see a huge black wave speeding down upon us, with a dense leaden mist accompanying it, causing the surging crest of the monstrous billow to appear strangely distinct. I could not hope that the ship would withstand this awful charge; and when the stroke was delivered, I made sure that all was over with the Sea-bride and her freight.

The liveliest idea which I had ever conceived with regard to the force which is sometimes exercised by wind and water appeared quite pitifully weak when compared now with the actual illustration afforded me. The sea struck the hull of the ship a blow, causing her to stagger backward, and, sweeping over her

decks, carried away everything which was movable, while the blast tore all the standing sails clean out of their gaskets. I held fast to my support, though feeling myself deep below water, and, after a few seconds of awful suspense, I emerged from the watery depths, and then recovered hope to find that, after all, the battered ship was not yet heading to the bottom. There had been a dreadful noise from the crashing of spars and ripping of sails, together with the sounds produced by the violent wrenching away of bolted framework; and now, as the nearly wrecked ship rode again upon the surface, a mingled shout of fearful agony rang high above the roar and hiss of the living sea and the shriek of the furious wind.

A hasty survey enabled me to learn that the bulwarks on the starboard side, where the first shock had occurred, had been smashed in, and nearly all carried away, and that the sea was pouring in on that side at every roll of the luckless vessel.

"Heaven help us!" cried Spinner, at my side, horror-struck to behold the cruel sea leaping in dangerous volume right over the ship whenever she made a lurch to leeward. Now, in the vehemence of his feelings, he usurped the prerogative of the captain, crying

out to the distracted steersman,—“Bring her up to the wind on the port tack!”

The man at the wheel obeyed the unauthorized order, and presently, as the ship came to the wind, her decks were no longer flooded by the sea. There had been most terrible confusion raging all over the ship immediately before the helm was put to starboard, and Spinner's usurping act thereby escaped the notice of the officers.

It was now ascertained that two men had been blown out of the rigging, and the fourth mate, together with a boy, had been washed overboard. The damage sustained by the ship consisted in the loss of her starboard bulwarks and all the boats on that quarter. Nearly one-half of the original complement of spars and sails had gone by the board. The cabin doors were stove in, or broken away, and the hold was choked with water.

The passengers all came running out of the cabins, uttering loud cries of frantic alarm; and as at this time the storm was raging with a fiendish furiousness, the scene was one of the most shocking description. The seamen being distracted from their urgent duties by the panic-stricken souls swarming the decks, the situation was indeed a perilous one.

Fortunately our captain now exercised an autocratic authority, and sternly ordered all the passengers back at once to their cabins. The ladies were loud in their entreaties to be allowed to remain on deck, protesting that they could not endure the suspense which would be inevitable to them, if locked up in cabins knee-deep in water. The men, on the other hand, were sullen, and demanded their freedom as a right. The captain proved himself a man of firm will, and intimated, with evident determination, that he should not hesitate, if need be, to employ force to compel obedience to his authority; whereupon the protestors yielded instant submission.

I was obliged to retire into the cabin with my fellow-passengers, when I found the state of affairs there was of a very depressing nature. The various articles of furniture and the luggage had been precipitated upon the floor by the shock of the storm, and were floating now in something like a foot depth of seawater. Great danger existed that some of the heavier things, in rocking to and fro with the roll of the ship, would inflict severe injuries upon the wretched beings assembled within this den of misery. I quickly perceived the critical nature of our situation, and took upon

myself to order all the ladies and children immediately into their respective berths; and then I called upon the men to join me in setting things in such order as the circumstances would admit of.

When at length the weaker members of our company were all well ensconced out of harm's way, and the men were busily engaged baling out the water and arranging the vagrant articles, the captain came into the cabin, accompanied by Spinner. I was not surprised to find that Spinner had been excluded from subjection to the terms laid upon all the rest of the passengers, as I remembered he was acquainted with the chief mate of the ship, and was recognized by him as a proficient mariner. The captain now impressively bade us all lend attention to what words he had come here to say to us; and thereupon ensued a dread silence, evidently in consequence of the company having conceived that their doom was about to be declared. For a few moments this dread hush prevailed amidst the soul-appalled beings, waiting in expectancy to hear words which should proclaim their end was at hand; and at this time there crashed through the cabin a horrific spasm of sound, from the stroke of a great wave against the

hull of the ship, and the passage of a mighty wind through her dismantled rigging. Then the captain spake again, bidding his despairing hearers understand that he had not yet abandoned hope; and immediately a scene ensued which will rest in my memory for ever. Strong men, who had hitherto preserved their self-possession, now yielded to their feelings, and, sobbing loudly, embraced each other with frantic earnestness.

Our captain was evidently a brave man, but the present moving scene proved too much for his fortitude, and he was obliged to retire for a little while, in order to recover sufficient composure to calmly finish the explanation he had come here to make. When he returned to the cabin, he promptly commanded attention, and proceeded, with authoritative voice, to state that he had commissioned Mr. Spinner to arrange the able-bodied passengers into gangs to work the pumps, and perform such other duties as were necessary for the salvation of the ship.

"This gentleman," concluded he, pointing to Spinner, "will act as my representative. Remember that; all of you."

"I will go to the pump," cried one of the passengers, when the captain had left the cabin.

"You will do as I may order you," said Spinner, with a tone of command quite worthy of the captain himself.

The chidden one laughed a forced laugh, and then humbly declared that he was quite willing to submit to the direction of the deputy autocrat.

"Well, then, go to the pump," said Spinner, calmly.

"Good!" uttered the submissive one, making his way out to his appointed post. "I get the post I desired, after all."

"Not because you desired it," said Spinner, with deliberate emphasis; "but because you are strong, and the work is hard."

The proof afforded by this little incident that the young director was possessed eminently of the rare and valuable quality of self-command went far to reconcile the various passengers to his rule, and he was able to arrange the men into separate gangs, and set them to work without difficulty or delay.

My office consisted in helping to clear and arrange the cabins; and I take some credit to myself, inasmuch as that I set about my given task without changing my clothes, which were soaked in every thread. While I was engaged, with my companions, upon this job, which

seemed comparable to that one of sanitary nature once undertaken by Hercules, I was startled by the sudden appearance of the fair young actress.

"Are we going to be saved?" she said, with quiet, serious voice, but exhibiting no fear.

I stopped my work for a moment, and then requested her to go back to her berth, and try to resign herself to the mercy of Heaven. "We are certainly in great peril," explained I, "yet we are not without hope."

"I observed all that passed in here," she said, with subdued, melancholy accents. "Is he not noble?"

"The captain?"

"No; your friend."

"Yes," I said, with a sigh of bitterness, as I bent again to my weary, cold work, "he is indeed noble."

A sense of hopeless despondency crept over my aching heart, as I stooped again and again to fill up bucket after bucket, and pass it on to my neighbour; and I now even regretted that the mountainous wave which had swept over my head had not added me to the number of its victims.

I listened, anxious to hear again the sweet.

plaintive accents of my heart's idol, though I expected no hope from her words. She spoke no further, and I lifted up my eyes to look upon her, and then I beheld her kneeling in prayer upon the wet floor of her own little cabin.

The unexpected vision presented by this worldly minded maiden bowed down in pious supplication so affected me that, while continuing my labours, I offered up to Heaven the silent, heart-felt appeal to take my life as a sacrifice to serve for the benefit of my unfortunate fellows, if such sacrifice might be acceptable.

The hapless ship pitched and rolled with ominous heaviness under the tremendous forces of the storm, and ever and anon there would come a fierce wave sweeping over the decks. Then a hideous chorus of groans, and crunching sounds, from the strain of fixed woodwork sounded continuously in every direction.

The work entrusted to my care was at length accomplished, and I was about to go forth in search of Spinner to ask him for some other task, when he anticipated my purpose by coming into the cabin to draw off some of my fellow-labourers for certain pressing duties on deck. He was rejoiced to find that he could now get every one of us for the waiting jobs ;

and his admirable capacity for management was at this time evinced as he proceeded, without the least perplexity, to assign the respective labourers to such duties as were most suitable to each one's capacity.

"And now, Amor, for yourself," finally said he, "go and change your clothes; and then take a turn in the cook's galley to prepare coffee for the crew."

Now this especial duty was one which appeared to me, all wet and cold as I was, as positively of a delightful nature, and my heart quite bounded within me to think that I should presently enjoy a position out-and-out the most enviable in the ship. I conceived it my strict duty to accept the favouring order of my friend in authority, although likely it may have been that then my wish was father to my thought. I ran into my sleeping-cabin, and hastily changed my entire apparel; but, on thinking the matter over, I saw it would scarcely be fair for me to have the post by the fire, and I determined to ask that I should be put to some work requiring powers of endurance.

I found Spinner waiting for me when I came out of my cabin, and I instantly requested him to put me to some harder task than that of preparing coffee.

He was evidently displeased at my self-denying solicitation, and after a short pause of reflection made answer that he fully appreciated my motive for my present request, but should decline to favour it. "I shall not, on this occasion of emergency," he concluded, with stern expression, "respect any considerations of a punctilious nature. I must therefore insist that you go about the duty of making coffee, without any further words in the matter."

I knew that I should only exasperate him if I objected further to his order, and I said no more on the subject, but inquired where I should find the various articles necessary for the proper performance of my duty. At this moment, to my great surprise, the young actress emerged timidly from her private little cabin, and with hesitating manner asked Spinner to allow her to relieve me of my cooking job.

"Ridiculous!" he ejaculated, with a short, dry laugh. Then he pointed significantly outward, as the swash of an inundating wave sounded high above the continuous turmoil.

"Oh, pray let me make the coffee," pleaded the fair one, laying her fingers, in her eagerness, upon the dictator's arm. "I am quite strong,

and I can prepare coffee very nicely indeed ; much nicer, I am certain, than Mr. Amor."

"Pardon me," coldly replied Spinner, gazing searchingly into the sad, upturned face of the strangely pleading maiden, "but will your mother accompany you?"

"I am afraid not," she said, with sudden dejection. "She is in her bed, and has told me that she is convinced that everything is at an end, and that she shall enjoy her bed while it is yet dry."

"Your mother is a profound philosopher," said Spinner, with a pleasant smile.

"Oh, let me go to the galley without my mother!" importuned the maiden, with timorous coaxing manner.

"No," returned Spinner, promptly, "certainly not."

"No!" repeated the girl, looking almost amazed to find herself thus harshly checked.

"Come, Amor," said Spinner, abruptly, moving towards the doorway.

"Stay yet a minute," cried the maiden, with choking accents, and then she ran into her cabin.

Spinner looked darkly at me when the young actress had closed her door behind her, and, with suppressed voice of anger, inquired if I

had prompted her by sign to make her present strange request.

I answered that I had not done so, and then I went on to state that the thought, however, had occurred to me that it was advisable to entrust all the light duties into the hands of our ladies, as thereby they would be prevented from falling into a state of moping despondency.

"Thanks, Amor, for your suggestion," said Spinner, with sudden agreeableness, after a brief pause. "Now please go and summon them all here."

I reminded him that only one of their own sex could properly perform that office; whereupon my rough-natured companion, with a friendly smile, remarked that Nature surely intended me to be a master of ceremonies. Then he stepped over to the young actress's cabin, and tapped for her to come out.

"Mamma will go," cried the girl, hastily opening the door. "She will be ready in a minute."

"I must consult our captain upon the matter of your request," he remarked thoughtfully to the impulsive girl, as though he felt the subject to be one of very weighty responsibility. "In the meantime, go and tell the ladies I have

something important to speak with them upon ; and be careful, at the same time, to inform each one that I am not here in the capacity of a prophet of woe."

The young actress went obediently to execute the instructions now given her ; and presently the various gentle and tender occupants of the small cabins came into the saloon. Despite the assurance they had received, no sooner were they assembled together than they one and all lifted up their voices in lamentation.

Spinner's fortitude quite failed him on seeing the poor ladies and children yield to their instinctive feelings, and, after making two or three ineffectual attempts to explain his message to them, he stepped over to the cabin doorway, and beckoned me to come to him. "Amor," said he, somewhat impatiently, "I feel myself quite unfitted for the management of these helpless ones. Now, I believe you are so fitted, and I would thank you to relieve me of the duty."

I answered that I was willing to undertake the delicate duty ; whereupon he pressed my hand in token of his thanks, and then proceeded to instruct me to caution my sensitive charges to be prepared to hear presently some startling sounds, and to avoid entertaining alarm thereat.

The crew, explained he, were now preparing to cut away the mizen and the maintop-gallant masts, as they were inextricably encumbered with broken rigging and tattered sails. "These operations," he concluded, with a grim smile, "will of course be attended with some considerable noise."

"Is there ground yet for hope, do you think?" I inquired, anxious to know the worst.

"Never say die," replied the strong-hearted one, and then he hastily left me.

The duty I had now to perform was indeed a difficult one. I managed, however, to accomplish it with far greater success than I had even dared to hope for.

When I had concluded my cautionary remarks to my infirm charges, there came to me an emissary from Spinner with the communication that the captain consented to the proposal for the young actress and her mother to take up the duty of making coffee for the crew and working passengers, and that he cordially agreed with my opinion that the other ladies in the cabin should be encouraged to set about helping themselves.

I was now positively amused, despite the depressing circumstances affecting me, to note

the elation exhibited by the young actress and her mother at their self-accounted present good luck. They shook hands with each other, and exchanged congratulations in regard to their promotion to the office of preparing coffee for the crew. The favour had been given only after grave deliberation, and it was valued accordingly.

“Ah, ma fille!” exclaimed the little Frenchwoman, seizing her daughter’s hand with both her own, “ve shall give to zare taste ze true café before ze death.”

The maiden, with manner of frenzied enthusiasm, now handed her mother a waterproof coat, and then encased herself in a similar garment—these serviceable wraps having been forwarded to them by the thoughtful young director—and presently the two adventurous ladies stood ready to be conducted by me to their post.

At this moment a terrific crash sounded high above the dread clamour of the raging elements, and the ship heaved over to starboard with such precipitancy as to cause all the occupants of the cabin to be thrown down pell-mell upon the floor, while the pieces of furniture which had recently been stowed away were again pitched about in a wrecking confusion.

I was unable to control my own mind from taking alarm at the present sudden catastrophe, and therefore could not blame my nervous companions for yielding completely, as they did, to their instinctive apprehension.

The ship lay on her beam-ends for a long space of time, as it seemed, and during that terrible interval the poor ladies and children were so affected with a vehement terror that, when at length the ship righted, they were totally deprived of strength. I now, with a sad heart, advised the helpless crowd to seek again the repose of their berths, and my feeble charges separated immediately into groups, and each trooped off in dull obedience to my compassionate counsel.

“En avant!” exclaimed the little French-woman with dramatic gesture, addressing herself to me, when I was free to proceed on deck.

It somewhat astonished my insular mind to observe enthusiasm displayed in the small matter of going forth to prepare coffee for some hard-toiling seafarers; but I concealed my feelings, and quietly led the way.

The scene on deck was awful in the extreme. The gale was blowing with extreme fury, and the distressed vessel was being assailed from

the grandest of batteries—wind and sea. The roar and hiss of the raging elements were so deafening, that the strongest man could not make his words audible to his fellows except at the shortest distance off. I observed that the captain and his officers were using trumpets. A positive spectacle of ruin was presented aloft, as loose cordage and strips of canvas writhed and flapped about the remaining masts. The starboard side of the ship was all dismantled, and the sea, visible immediately beyond it, rushed by with the velocity of a mill-race. The purpose of the navigators was evidently to keep the larboard to the wind, and, by the obstacle thus opposed to the forces of the storm, great sheets of drenching spray, at the impact of every wave, were forced high in air, and then driven by the wind across the deck. The atmosphere was charged to the full with saline moisture, and large masses of creamy foam hurtled through it in every direction, while the mighty ocean appeared as though stirred by the upheaving power of volcanic fires.

My heart quailed within me as I observed a scowling mist driving overhead, blotting out the sky, and my dread was greatly increased when I remarked the livid waves careering

onward in giant magnitude, and thought they were surely proceeding to submerge all the low-lying parts of the far-distant shore.

A strange, solemn feeling was awakened within me to hear amidst the terrible dim of the elements the monotonous pulsating thud of the machinery on board, and to observe the steady action of the men working the pumps, and performing various other offices all in opposition to the destructive attempts of the raving wind and water. A pitched battle was now being fought out betwixt the huge forces of Nature, on the one side, and cunning, pigmy man on the other, and the issue was as yet doubtful.

Spinner was standing by the men at the pumps, shouting words of encouragement to them when I came out of the cabin with my fair companions, and, immediately upon recognizing us, he came over to pilot us in a safe way of going. His clothes were dripping wet, and his hands were smeared with tar. His face bore a tint as of red bronze, and presented a most extraordinary contrast with his beard, which was hoary with the churned froth of the spray. He stood in front of the fair Eve, smiling encouragingly to her, and then waved his hand in the direction of the storm, as if to

express that he and his brave companions were confident that they would succeed in holding their own against its efforts.

The maiden had been stricken with terror on first beholding the scene of universal commotion, and she was now staring wildly about her. But no sooner did she meet the eyes of the brave young leader, than she gained fresh confidence. She instinctively put forth her hand and touched him, as though she trusted to gain by her simple act some further strength.

The little Frenchwoman, at the instant of her contemplation of the wild scene now exhibited on deck, and all around, had retreated, shuddering again, into the passage of the cabin.

I stood outside, waiting for my dutiful charge to recover from her first emotion of terror, and, just as she had nodded to Spinner to lead onward, an incident occurred which caused a general panic on board. The ship, rearing at this time upon the crest of a monstrous billow, was struck full upon both hull and rigging by a powerful blast of wind. The concussion was so violent that it caused many of both the crew and passengers to measure their lengths upon the deck. At the

same moment the fore-topmast yielded to the impetus, and fell with a crack like that of a gun-shot.

Spinner, with admirable promptitude, flung his arm around the distracted maiden, and whirled her backward upon the doorway of the cabin, when she came in violent contact with the framing. She did not sustain, however, any serious injury, the force of the blow being directly received by the protector's arm. This prompt action of our brave leader was performed only just in time, as the broken topmast, by the outrageous strength of the blast, was driven to starboard, and fell, half on deck, and half overboard, while the rigging attached to it covered the very spot which had been occupied by the cowering girl.

The amateur hands fled precipitately to various quarters under cover; but the trained hands knew a trick better than that of flight. They leaped with promptitude upon the prostrated mast, and then vigorously plying their hatchets, succeeded, in a short time, in setting the wreckage afloat.

Spinner now asked me to extract from his breast-pocket a flask containing brandy, and give a little of the stimulant to the terrified girl and her mother, and then explained that

his own hands were so numbed that he could scarcely use them.

I acted instantly on his instructions, and was glad to see the maiden revive quickly in spirits under the influence of the potent restorative. She remained resting against the door-post of the cabin, watching, with an intense interest, the labours of the axe-wielding seamen, and, after the last loose spar had been flung adrift, she turned again to Spinner, and asked him to lead her on to her post.

"They are brave men, these poor sailors," she remarked, with accents of deeply-felt commiseration. "They are working at the constant risk of their own lives, to try and save us; so I long to do something for them in return."

"Ah, oui!" ejaculated the little French-woman, from her sheltered position at the entrance of the cabin-passage.

"Come, time presses," said Spinner, with unaccountably sudden impatience, and his features appeared slightly distorted, as though by severe physical pain.

"I am ready," returned the maiden, starting away from her prop with a look of determination in her beautiful countenance.

With strange, moody silence, Spinner pro-

ceeded to lead the way to the galley, and the two ladies and I followed close behind him. The ship was heaving to such an extreme degree that we could only proceed slowly step by step; and presently the maiden, being startled by a copious shower of spray, nervously caught hold of Spinner's right arm, whereupon he sprang forward convulsively, uttering a smothered cry of pain.

It was now patent to us all that he had suffered some severe injury to his arm when performing his prompt act of rescue.

"What is it?" cried the maiden, with a spasmodic gasp.

"Never mind, just now," he replied, abruptly.

And then passing his uninjured arm at the back of the terrified fair one, he hurried her through the storm.

I followed with the mother, and, as soon as the two ladies were installed at their new post, Spinner went off to seek the ministrations of the ship's surgeon.

I stayed for some time with my fair friends, assisting them to put things in working order, and I was glad to observe that the little Frenchwoman entered upon her new duties with much zest. The maiden seemed animated

with the keen desire to earn commendation in her present extraordinary task, and quite surprised me by her resolute performance.

"He is hard, you know," she said to me, contemplatively nodding her shapely head; and then engaged washing cups and saucers; "yet he is brave and good. Won't he be pleased," she added, with a quiet smile, "when he sees the work I have done!"

"He has ze goodness of ze gold," chimed in the mother, taking a discriminating sniff at the fragrant brew. "He did save ze life of ma chérie, and I shall remember him toujours."

"Oh, mamma!" cried the maiden, with sudden emotion, "you are saying what you ought not to say."

"Toujours—c'est vrai!" answered the irrepressible little Frenchwoman, going on briskly with her work.

When now I saw that matters with my two fair friends had grown comfortable, I left them to manage for themselves, and sallied forth to seek Spinner, to ask him to employ me upon some exacting job. I had been conscious for some time of a strange, rattling noise proceeding amidships, and my curiosity prompted me to ascertain the cause of this new alarming din. I crept along under the lee of the remaining bul-

wark, and presently discovered a body of men engaged discharging some cargo iron rails overboard, with the view of easing the ship, which was making but very little headway.

It afforded me a striking illustration of the extreme hardship which attends the lives of the adventurous men who trust their fortune upon the great deep, now to observe the group of my unfortunate fellows working with might and main at their heart-breaking occupation, while above and around them the phantom-shaping mist flew by on the wings of the howling wind, and broad sheets of deadly cold salt spray poured, at short intervals, down upon them.

The faithful captain of the ship was overlooking the desperate labour, and I directed to him an inquiry as to the whereabouts of Spinner.

"Just what I desire to know myself," shouted the brave mariner into my ear. "He is worth a score in the ship, and I miss him as bad as may be."

I now inquired where I should find the surgeon, and being informed that he was in the "foc'sle," attending to no less than four cases of serious accident, thither I went in search of Spinner.

I found him in the forecastle, and now ascer-

tained that his hurt was declared to be a very aggravated sprain of the wrist, which would render his arm useless certainly for the rest of the voyage, and probably for some considerable time afterwards. This man's spirit was, indeed, akin to that of the renowned, gallant Sir Philip Sydney, for, like that noble warrior, he waived his own pressing claims on the attention of the healing ministers in favour of his humble companions in misfortune, who were in worse plight than himself. He was engaged, at the time when I discovered him, holding a bowl of water in assistance upon an operation then being performed by the surgeon upon a poor sailor. An uncontrollable shiver from acute pain was affecting every part of his system.

I hastened to give him the cheering information that affairs in the galley were now proceeding quite prosperously, and that the desired coffee was already fit to be served out.

"Good!" said he, hardly able to articulate from the involuntary nervous action of his jaw. "Then go and serve it out in the aft cabin."

"Would you like some yourself?" I inquired kindly.

"Well—yes," he answered, trying unavail-

ingly to repress the nervous tremor which had seized him. "God knows, I should. But first see after the officers and the crew."

I went instantly upon my new duty, and while now the bitter wind smote me with its merciless scourge of biting, cold brine, and the deadly sea raged, wolf-like, round about me, I felt my heart stirred with a noble emotion to reflect that this awful visitation had induced examples of human courage which surely could not fail to appear admirable even in the sight of Heaven.

I secured the assistance of a couple of stripplings, by the order of the captain, and then took them on with me to the galley to transport the coffee thence into the aft cabin.

The little Frenchwoman appeared well satisfied with the result of her efforts, and exhibited quite an artistic skill in the decanting of the aromatic infusion.

"C'est bon," remarked she, after covering each transporting vessel with a piece of woollen cloth, in addition to its tin lid. "Now," she proceeded, with an air of self-conscious sagacity, alluding to her careful labours of stowage, "vidout so, la bestiale tempête vould have ze soul de mon café."

The maiden, despite all my remonstrances,

would go with me to preside at the serving out of the comforting, warm infusion.

"I wish to make friends with our brave sailors," she said, with quiet, determined voice.

The rough honest seamen came into the cabin all dripping with sea-water, and chilled to the bone. They stared with admiring wonder to see a lovely being with golden-yellow tresses—just like one of their own charming mermaids—waiting with a loving impatience to pour out nice coffee for them. As each gallant Jack got his pannikin filled he toasted the fair young queen of hearts, and then sat down to enjoy his relishable draught, while having his eyes delighted at the same time. The young actress was at this time quaintly attired in the waterproof coat provided her by the care of Spinner.

The coffee was indeed a very great success. The worthy seamen testified their high appreciation of its excellence by eloquent sighs after each act of deglutition, and also by frequent acts of sniffing up its aroma. It was a fine treat for the fatigued, brave fellows to sip clear, strong coffee, piping hot, and munch biscuits under the favouring smiles of the bonniest lass they had ever clapped eyes upon. And it was strong evidence of their manly

obedience to duty, when the captain sent word to them to give place to another set, that they jumped to their feet, and without a single murmur filed out to resume their grim battle with the assailing elements.

The fair one ran impulsively to the cabin door when the last of her favourites had passed out, and kissed her hand to them with a charming grace.

The captain, with self-sacrificing faithfulness to duty, came for his cup of coffee into the aft cabin with the last detachment of his men. "We are in a pretty mess now, boys," said he with jocular voice, to the great delight of his accompanying hands. "Why, I declare the crew have one and all fallen in love with the pretty, good fairy here in charge of the stores, and the foolish fellows have grown, I am afraid, a little unsteady over the matter." -

"Well, captain," replied the blushing young beauty, saucily, proceeding with deft fingers to fill up the cups of the newly arrived company, "now that you have told me that your men are all in love with me, I must tell you that I am in love with them."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the simple-minded captain; and his men imitated his merry example. Then he proceeded gaily to remark,

—"Upon my word, my dear, I think you are cut out for a sailor's wife."

"That's true, captain," murmured his blunt, honest followers; believing, no doubt, that the compliment was one to be applied only to the rarest of women. Now, this pleasantness, though of no especial merit in itself, was yet of the highest value to the mind of the interested maiden; and it also served to increase the captain's popularity with his men.

When the sailors had all received their refreshment, and the working passengers were waiting to be called into the cabin, the maiden gave up her post at the table, and retired to the galley.

Now, in resigning her post at this juncture, she displayed herself possessed of a sagacious spirit, for she evidently considered that, albeit she had found only pleasure in serving disciplined men, she would, to a certainty, find only vexation in attending to the wants of men who were quite undisciplined.

When, at length, the passengers were admitted into the cabin, their conduct was simply shameful. They were all famishing and cramped with cold, from long exposure in soaked garments, and were, therefore, impatient

of any observance of propriety. The foremost seized immediately upon the large utensils to help themselves ; and then followed a scene of positive brutality. The result was that by far the greater part of the excellent coffee was spilt upon the floor. Angry discontent prevailed. The feeling now engendered grew from bad to worse, and presently some words were exchanged plainly betokening that outrage upon a particular offender was meditated. It now transpired that Stoa had not been seen helping in any work, and that even at present he was lying asleep in his berth. The daring members of the dutiful passengers took upon themselves to pass judgment upon the delinquent, and, after a short consultation, four of their number left the cabin. After the lapse of some two or three minutes, the mysterious detachment returned, each man bearing buckets filled with sea-water. Then two of these water-carriers took up a position at the side of Stoa's cabin door, while the remaining two, with grim silence, entered into the skulker's retreat.

The scene presented by the movements of these men was positively thrilling in its interest, resembling, in a certain sense, the scene in 'Macbeth,' when the Thane, with dreadful

intent, passes out of sight to seek his victim, while his equally guilty consort stands motionless, watching, at the door.

Presently the sound of violently spilt water issued from the sleeping-cabin, and then another sound of the same kind quickly followed, which seemed to drown a gasping shriek that had rent the air. With haste, the two agents of violence now emerged from the theatre of their lawless action; and shortly their victim appeared, when he was subjected to another drenching course. The rude fellows laughed unfeelingly on seeing their wretched victim gasp and pant under the shock given him, and now they taunted him, saying that the baptism they had given him would make him fit to go outside and take his turn at the work.

Stoat spoke not a word, but stood in crouching attitude against the doorway of his cabin, breathing with short laborious gasps. His elfin locks, all dripping with sea-water, hung down over his ugly face, and served to intensify the hateful glare of his eyes. No compassion was expressed for this miserable wretch. Indeed, there was much satisfaction exhibited at his misfortune. Every one of the passengers present had been drenched by the sea-water

over and over again while performing his duty, and no sympathy was felt for this one who had suffered because of his despicable shirking of duty. Indignant demands were presently expressed that this low-minded creature should be compelled to go out and help in the pressing labours; and the strongest of his assailants proceeded arbitrarily to lay hold of him.

Uttering a cry like some enraged wild beast, Stoa sprang upward, and buried his incising teeth deep in the deltoid of his enemy's arm.

The rage of the bitten one was awful to witness. He took Stoa by the throat, and knocked his head repeatedly against a post, and, had he not been restrained in time, he would undoubtedly have killed the wretch outright then and there. This man was an American; and one, to judge by his expressions, who held no law in respect. His arm was fast shedding blood, the sight of which, together with the pain of the wound, excited him to deadly fury. He proceeded to register a solemn vow that he would never rest until he had exacted a full measure of vengeance for the inhuman injury which had been done him.

Spinner at this moment came into the cabin, and I observed that his injured arm was now supported by a makeshift sling. A shocking

scene was at this moment presented in this little theatre of action. On the floor crouched the battered skulker, with his evil countenance smeared with the blood of his enemy. The expression in his eyes was that of a savage beast at bay, as he drew his breath with spasmodic gasps. Opposite him stood the wounded American, restrained by two of his comrades; and now, with his bleeding arm uplifted, uttering once again his vengeful vow in language fitting only the realms of Tophet.

Surrounding these two prominent figures were the male passengers, all with dark, lowering brows, maintaining a round of imprecations upon the head of the hang-dog who had so grievously offended. A heavy, close steam, arising from the wetted garments, filled the whole cabin, and the only light present being that proceeding from a lamp suspended to the ceiling, the place was but feebly illuminated. The shouts of anger, though proceeding from many throats at one and the same time, were sometimes overpowered by the roaring, shrieking, and hissing of the hurricane. Occasionally the labouring ship heaved to such an extreme degree, that her decks would become steeply inclined planes, and then the circle of angry beings would sway and stagger over to the

depressed side, with a manner of helplessness pitifully at variance with their vehement expressions.

Spinner had come here to summon the men back to their work, and, on learning the cause of the present sad disturbance, he advanced close up to the cowering savage, and impulsively demanded that judgment should be instantly passed upon him.

"Give him over to me, and I will pitch him overboard," shouted the wounded American, with determined voice.

"The law forbids the adoption of your proposal," replied Spinner, almost apologetically.

"The law of England does not rule us now," sternly remarked the son of freedom. "Let us have Lynch-law."

"The law of emergency," said Spinner, in considering tone.

A murmur of approval sounded all round the ring of humanity standing in judgment.

"Gentlemen," continued Spinner, with sudden resolution, lifting up his hands to command silent attention, "let us have a proper understanding between us. I would remind you that our present position is one of an extremely perilous nature. Many of the crew are lost, and many are disabled.

Now, urgent necessity exists that every able-bodied passenger should lend a hand in easing the ship. The occasion is one which demands the establishment amongst us of expedient, rigorous law. I submit what is termed Lynch-law to your vote."

"No good man need fear such law," exclaimed a stern-looking passenger. "Show hands for it," he added, holding up his own right hand.

Every one present, excepting the dastardly creature on the floor, held up his hand in testimony of approval of the proposed inauguration of the law of extremity.

Spinner now promptly procured some writing materials, and drew out a form of agreement to the resolution as voted, and, putting his own signature first, invited his supporters to append each one his own sign-manual to the sheet. With willing alacrity the passengers, one and all, put their names to the severely conditional agreement. Then Spinner placed the important document in his breast-pocket, and without more ado, proceeded to inaugurate the reign of the new Draconic law, by empanelling five members, answering to every fifth name on the list, to sit in judgment upon the case of the grievously offending miscreant.

The decision of the umpires was soon made,

and ran to the effect that the man Stoa should be ordered by the authority-in-chief to go on at once to the work; and in the event of his non-compliance, that he should again be soused with sea-water. Then, with regard to his ferocious act committed upon the person of a fellow-passenger, it was decreed that he should be given up for trial at the first port which the ship might reach.

The Englishmen present were satisfied with the decision; but the Americans were unanimously discontented that the undutiful wretch should have had such easy terms extended him, and, indeed, openly expressed their opinion that he ought to have been condemned to take his chance upon a hen-coop in the open sea.

"Go to your duty," said Spinner, peremptorily to the miscreant, upon hearing the judgment passed upon him.

Stoa returned no answer, but remained sitting in obstinate sullenness on the floor.

Spinner now turned to the man whom Stoa had wounded with his fangs, and quietly said to him,—“I shall leave you in charge of our refractory member.”

The vile wretch sprang to his feet on hearing that the American would be left in charge.

of him, and displayed himself willing to go about his duty.

Our leader now ordered us to resume our trying labours, and we all obediently passed out into the bleak, open air, to renew our arduous struggle with the raging elements. I then joined, by order, the company who were engaged in throwing the iron cargo overboard, to make the ship ride easier.

Spinner came to me in the hold, while I was hard at work, and spoke to me with almost his original friendly manner. "The bitten American must be taken great care of, Amor," said he, with grim humour, scarce able to render his words audible amidst the clanging of iron and the turmoil of the tempest; "he may prove a very godsend to you."

"How can you take care of him?"

"I have seen to his wound being carefully cauterized," he explained, with a cold laugh, as he went again upon deck.

The desperate work in the hold was continued throughout the whole stormy night, and frequently, during the awful hours of darkness, great seas swept right over the ship. Two more poor souls were carried overboard; the evidence of their sad fate being the piercing shriek uttered by each unfortunate as

he felt himself borne away into the jaws of death. The night was exceedingly dark, and the heading waves looked more like molten pitch than water. The wind seemed as though inspired with a hating malice, and ever and anon lifted up great quantities of cold sea spray, and cast them into the faces of the hard-striving voyagers. A species of devilry seemed to possess the wind of that never-to-be-forgotten night, for it gave forth screeching and whistling sounds altogether foreign to those of its usual performance.

I cannot conceive how it was that our ship withstood the attacks made on her; for, indeed, she was buffeted at a rate which was forcible enough, I believe, to have broken down a resisting giant rock. Twice during that night of horror the indomitable strivers retired into the cabin to partake of coffee and biscuits. The young actress and her mother conducted the refreshment service, and were much applauded for their excellent performance in the matter.

"The conduct of these two ladies is simply beyond praise," said the captain, with low, earnest voice, while he was taking coffee with the working gang of which I was a member. Then he went on to say that he intended to

have the likenesses of the estimable gentle ones done in photography at New York. "I shall hang a copy up in the saloon," said he, with a reflective shake of his honest head; "one in the aft cabin, and one in the foc'sle."

"A capital notion, captain," remarked a tall, shrewd-looking American.

"Our friend will make money over the captain's notion," said another Yankee, when we were all moving out to return to our strenuous labours.

CHAPTER V.

MORNING broke, happily for us poor voyagers, now almost exhausted, with promise of climatic amendment. The sea was apparently as wild as ever, but the wind had greatly subsided, and now, to our great joy, the weather-wise mariners saw augury in various form to warrant strong hope that the climax of the hurricane had passed with the darkness.

The strength, even of the most powerful of the workers, was evidently "at the beginning of the end," and that of the weaker in many cases already quite exhausted, when the captain made the announcement that he could now dispense with the cohort of auxiliaries who had so nobly assisted him in his grand battle against the united forces of the main. With triumph in their hearts, the released ones went to seek re-invigorating repose.

Spinner had not spared himself in his painful state throughout the live-long warring night, but had gone here and there, directing the various operations, and getting repeatedly

drenched by the inundating waves. I now went up to him, and inquired how his injured arm was progressing, when he informed me that it was so racked by pain as almost to drive him to positive distraction.

"Are you going to bed?" I asked, with deep commiseration.

"Bed!" he uttered, with a sad smile. "Oh dear, no. I must try and content myself with walking to and fro, like a polar bear in a cage."

"You must have received a very severe blow."

"I can tell you, Amor," he said, abruptly, with a confidential nod, "that your charmer is an exceptionally fine girl. Her weight must be equal to ten stone, at least."

I felt amused to hear this eccentric man selecting for his praise the extraordinary weight of Miss Melrose's general system in lieu of those more attractive perfections, the exquisite outline of her features, the delicate loveliness of her rosy complexion, the wondrous azure tint of her eyes, the glorious hue of her hair.

I had known that he much esteemed the possession of weighty tissue by man proper; but it surprised me now to learn that woman

was also, in his opinion, estimable upon the same account.

"It would seem that you have a Flemish conception of perfect beauty," said I, good-humouredly, to this admirer of physically well-developed woman.

"I have no fancy for your sylphides," he answered, wincing under a sudden throe of pain, but evidently striving hard to bear up against it. "I cannot appreciate the beauty of consumption or general debility."

I could plainly perceive that my stout-hearted companion was at this moment suffering extreme pain from his injured arm. The sprain was of the severest character, and had no doubt been greatly aggravated by exposure to cold and wet during the night. I observed that, while nowspeaking with me, he was affected frequently by shooting spasms of agony, and my heart grew filled with compassion for him. I tried to persuade him to go to the galley, where he might obtain the benefit of having his arm fomented by the hand of the gentle one who had unwittingly caused the injury. He positively scouted my advice, saying he would bear his pangs, and trust to nature for relief, rather than apply for succour at the hands of the young woman in question.

"Pray, Amor," he concluded, with serious warning voice, staring me full in the face, "say as little as you can to her about my sprain. I don't mind now telling you that it is an out-and-out thing of the kind, and that I apprehend some trouble with it. I desire, however, to keep the account of it almost entirely confined to the surgeon, you, and myself."

"Will you allow *me* to foment and dress your arm?" I said, impulsively, forgetful at the moment of the strange compact which still existed between us.

"You!" he exclaimed, with sudden vehemence, looking upon me with changed expression of surprise and gratefulness combined. "You, Amor!" Then he shook his head, and said, emphatically,— "No! by God, no!"

"You may properly accept my friendly offices," I said, with the sudden determination to bring about at once the re-establishment of our former friendship, "for I am willing to bind myself over to the terms of your proposition."

He started when I thus addressed him, and, without returning a word, walked abruptly over to the side of the ship, and gazed, with disturbed expression, out upon the palpitating horizon.

"Come over here," he said, after a protracted pause, "and lean with me upon the taffrail."

I yielded ready compliance to his curious request; when he, curiously enough, relapsed into his fit of meditation.

The sky was now brightly visible, and the ragged, black clouds of the exhausted tempest were dipping down below the leeward horizon, leaving the firmament in possession of majestic white masses of vapour, while the high-heaving sea had assumed a clear dark-green tint, and no longer tossed its foam into the air.

The east was already flushed with the golden beams of the approaching orb of day, and the glorious light danced upon the crest of the great billows. Our brave ship, as she rose and sank with the action of the stormy sea, lay alternately in shining light and cold deep shadow.

"Amor," at length said my companion, with low impressive voice, still directing his gaze away towards the brightening orient, "I have during the last few eventful days been looking myself carefully over, and the result is that I cannot any longer conscientiously accuse you of double dealing without at the same time admitting myself equally guilty with you. The fact is, old fellow, I must confess to you

that I am now in love with your supposed *inamorata*."

"What!" I exclaimed, in wild dismay, "you now love Eve Melrose?"

"With all my heart and soul, I believe," he calmly answered. Then he leaned his head upon his hands, with his elbows resting upon the taffrail, and looked again towards the brightening east. But while he so gazed it was evident, from his anxious expression, that his thoughts were not given to the pleasing scene of his contemplation.

I felt now totally forsaken by hope. I had for the last few days strongly suspected that my idol's heart was tenderly affected towards my friend, and the thought had, indeed, caused me a world of sorrow. I had, however, been able to bear myself up, in the blind confidence that the newly-awakened affection of the fair one would not grow to any degree of strength while its object continued unresponsive; and I had succeeded in convincing myself that Spinner would certainly remain true yet awhile to his first love. My dream was now at an end. The maiden was willing, and the man was willing, and therefore hope for me was no longer possible. I had been, according to my present opinion, surely a mere oaf, in hoodwink-

ing myself with the assurance that the maiden would not allow her feelings towards Spinner to grow out of her control so long as she should receive no encouragement from him, when I had my own case ready to hand for the instant disenchantment of my agreeable delusion. I entertained no ill-will towards Spinner for his loving devotion to the idol of my own heart, as I plainly perceived that he was smitten, so to say, in spite of himself. Indeed I thought his case, in its rise and progress, so much resembled my own, that to blame the one was to condemn the other.

"Have you spoken to her?" I inquired, with a feeling of dull loneliness at my heart. The blow now given to my hard-maintained hope almost crushed my entire spirit out of me. I was especially impressionable at this time, as I was labouring under extreme fatigue, consequent on the work of the night, and I felt myself sinking into a state of lethargy.

"I have not spoken a single word to her," said he, referring of course to words of love.

"She will, I believe, answer you favourably," I said, uttering my thoughts almost unconsciously.

"How have you arrived at that belief?" he sharply demanded.

"Only from signs," I answered, reflectively. Then I wearily laid my face within the hollow of my hands, and I would have fallen asleep but that I was recalled to wakefulness by the abrupt, strong voice of my new rival.

"What signs?" said he.

I looked up with dull comprehension, and said, almost mechanically, that I could not explain my words.

"Amor," he said, with friendly voice, laying his hand down upon my shoulder, "you are a good fellow—perhaps even too good. Now, although your over-candid statement has awakened within me an urging hope that I might be able to win what I most desire, I will not advantage myself of your absurdly generous tip. I mean to imitate your generosity over this matter, and so now I promise you that I will refrain from offering any warm attention to the pretty witch who has been able to sirenize us two knowing fellows out to sea, where we have had the devil to pay; and if you will consent to cancel our engagement, I promise you I shall re-embark for England on the second day after that on which we land at New York."

"Are you afraid for your arm?" I inquired, unable in my drowsy state to comprehend my

friend's meaning for his proposed haste in his re-embarkation.

"That, and much more than that," he answered, with a searching glance at my face. "I am afraid of the girl's happiness, of my own liberty, and of your reason—all which are. I fear, already at a low ebb."

If I had really cared more for the young actress's welfare than for my own, I suppose I should have encouraged my well-endowed rival to pursue his suit; but now I proved myself wanting in the rare virtue of self-denial. "I shall be sorry," said I, "when you go."

"You have only to pass the word, and I shall go with you," he replied, promptly. Then, with evident sincerity, he proceeded to say that he considered our engagement to be binding upon him as upon me, and that, therefore, if I withheld my consent to his proposition, it must go to the winds.

"I am willing," I said, roused a little by the strong interest of the moment. Then we clasped hands together, and looked straight into each other's eyes, and our old good friendship was summoned back to our hearts by that mystic touch and that mutually recognizing look.

It filled me with wonder now to reflect that the circumstances occasioning the re-establish-

ment of our good-fellowship were the very counterpart of those which had caused our falling out together.

My friend's arm had by this time become so intensely painful that it caused his eyes to overflow with moisture; and now, at my urgent advice, he went to seek the ministrations of the ship's surgeon.

When he had left me I thought to take counsel with myself, and to that end I began to promenade to and fro on the deck. Nature, however, refused to be baulked of her just rights, and insisted upon instant repose. Nothing loth, I sought the retirement of my berth, and had scarce lain down ere I sank into deep, dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER VI.

I AWOKE late in the afternoon, feeling greatly refreshed, when my thoughts reverted immediately to the disturbing news of the early morning. I could not blame Spinner for proceeding across the Atlantic in this particular ship, as I remembered that he had decided upon his strange step while he had no reason to suppose that I should accompany him. And, after all, it was matter for but little wonder that he had fallen earnestly in love with the young actress, for, indeed, her points of character were in many respects similar to his; and then, besides, she was very attractive in her personal attributes.

Spinner naturally esteemed mental qualities of an assertive disposition, and such qualities were possessed eminently by the fair young actress. Then, again, the man was well endowed with worldly wealth, and his relations were singularly few in number.

As I lay upon my bed thus reflecting upon the apparent nature and disposition of things

which were commanding my dearest interest, I became suddenly conscious that the ship was at a standstill, saving only what motion was given her by the waves and an occasional turn of her screw. I leaped instantly out upon the floor, and, unable to open the dead-light of my cabin, hastily dressed in the dark. In alarm I proceeded upon deck, when I saw a ship, very similar to our own, standing off at a short distance, apparently exchanging with us some pressing communications.

The sea had subsided with the wind, and, though still running high, was moving no longer in wild disorder, but proceeded in serried ranks of stately billows, while the sky was now magnificently refulgent from the cloud-encompassed beams of the declining sun.

Several of the ship's hands were engaged loosening one of the boats from the davits, the ship herself having been laid to the wind, that the boat should be launched under her lee. The tuneful "Yo, heave-ho!" of the men, sounded with the distinctness of a clarion after the din of a fiercely contested battle, and there was a ring of liveliness in it which was very grateful to my ear. The captain was standing by, engaged in conversation with some of his officers. I went up to those gentlemen and

requested them to inform me what was the occasion of our present stoppage.

"We are about to lose the best man on board," answered the estimable chief, with tone of regret. No sooner had he spoken than there appeared at the cabin door my restored friend, attired in full travelling costume, accompanied by two seamen proudly carrying his portmanteaux. The sudden surprise so affected me that I had to support myself against the bulwark. I was enabled, from the hurried conversation which took place around me, to comprehend that the opposite ship belonged to the same company that owned our own, and now, upon her homeward voyage, she had come so close to us that our captain had signalled her to lay to for the reception of an important message to take on to England. Spinner then, it was told, had suddenly determined to seize this opportunity to enter at once upon his return voyage.

"Ha, Amor!" cried my eccentric friend, surprised to see me at this time on deck. "So you have again checkmated me by your lynx-like vigilance."

"Why should you have designed to go without seeing me?"

"Because I had a weak fancy to play out

the part of the 'Flying Dutchman,' and disappear mysteriously from amongst you after the storm."

"You are only jesting."

"Why, man, I am a living jest in myself. Now I must tell you, I am only too glad to get out of your serious ship, and I trust I shall find things a little more pleasant in yonder galleon."

The assembled officers caught the gay humour of my whimsical friend, and bantering words and pleasant smiles were exchanged as the business of leave-taking went on.

The general scene presented at this time upon the ship was of a very agreeable nature when viewed with the remembrance of the sad condition of things during the recent storm. The decks had been cleared of all the loose wreckage, and treated also to a swabbing process; while the various men of the ship were grouped here and there upon a broad unencumbered area, conversing together with general joyousness. And then the sun was busy making ample amends with his golden bounty for the sad light-dearth of the past week.

Spinner took his leave of each present with such an airy light-hearted manner, that I despaired of ever understanding the man. I knew

that he was all the time suffering acute physical pain, and also, very probably, keen mental distress, and I could not fathom his motives for his present assumption of exuberant spirits.

"Good-bye, Amor," he said, gaily, offering me his hand, with unconcerned air. "I shall expect to hear from you."

"Are you going without a word for her?" said I, in his ear. Now, in my anxious question, I was not animated by pitiful inquisitiveness, but only by the spirit of perfect devotion toward the fair one for whom I had already sacrificed so much, and to whom I was jealous of the least slight being given. I was aware that my hurried question would very likely be misconstrued by my impulsive friend; but I had no time to choose my words, and I conceived it my duty to challenge the man in the matter of his observance of respect towards the absent fair one.

"I am doubtful," he answered, gazing curiously into my eyes, "whether you mean that as a feeler or a piece of ultra-friendly advice."

"Certainly, not as a feeler."

"You are, indeed, a *maladroit* fellow," pitifully said he, shaking his head at me with reproachful air. "Why, man, what you now

propose for me to do would have the effect of putting an extra spoke in your wheel."

"Oh, I cannot understand you," I said, impatiently.

"Amor, my friend," he responded, almost seriously, "pray accept my advice, and try henceforth to understand yourself. You are, at present, let me tell you, woefully deficient in the knowledge of your own real inclinations and capabilities."

"Do not torture me at the last moment," I said, feeling much pained in spirit by the caustic advice now given me.

"Well, good-bye, old fellow," returned my plain-spoken friend, with changed pleasant voice, wringing my hand with a hearty good will. "And may Heaven prosper you!"

I was able only with a severe effort to restrain the show of my emotion at this heart-stirring moment; but when at length I saw my dear friend betake himself down the suspended ladder into the waiting boat, I lost all my self-command, and sobbed for a few minutes with a womanly vehemence.

The various individuals upon deck now gathered together at the point of interest, and while the sailors on duty were busying themselves to liberate the boat from its painter, a

great surprise was given us all. This was in the sudden appearance of Stoa upon deck, portmanteau in hand, shouting out excitedly a demand to be allowed to leave the ship in company with Mr. Spinner.

The American whom Stoa had bitten was present, and now stepped out from amidst his companions, and, standing resolutely in front of the would-be deserter, bade him abandon his intention of leaving the ship at this time.

There was an unnatural calmness in the challenger's tone of voice which boded ill for Stoa in the event of his refusal of obedience. The wretch was struck, evidently, with fear, by the determined stern sound of the American's voice, as he started back a few paces, and instinctively raised his arm after the action of one expecting a blow. He, however, quickly recovered his presence of mind, and advanced to carry out his purpose; whereupon his bold enemy laid violent hands upon him, and forced him backward. In the scuffle which ensued, Stoa's portmanteau was dashed from his grasp, and, striking forcibly upon the deck, rebounded, and rolled finally out at the opening in the bulwarks into the sea.

I shall never forget the look which appeared on the unhappy wretch's face when he beheld

his bag disappear over the ship's side. He gasped and mouthed in a manner quite hideous to witness, and pointing with nervous hand in the direction taken by his lost property, ejaculated some broken words to the apparent effect that a thousand pounds had gone with his bag to the unfathomable depths of the ocean.

The officers present had interfered to separate these two contending men, and now, as Stoa was standing almost paralyzed with grief at his loss, the American posted himself at the avenue of escape, with evident determination of holding his position at all hazards. Then the captain stepped forward, and, with tone of authority, ordered Stoa to retire to the cabin.

"You cannot leave the ship now without my permission," said the capable autocrat. Then he turned to his men, and passed the order to let go the boat without further delay.

I verily believe that the sudden check thus given to Stoa's earnest desire to escape from his implacable enemy, following so closely upon the crushing blow given to his feelings by the irreclaimable submergence of all his goods, excited him to a state of temporary insanity, for, uttering a dreadful howl, he sprang forward, driving aside every one oppos-

ing his progress, and dropped himself over the ship's side, with the evident design of falling into the boat. Missing his aim, he fell into the sea instead, and, sinking for a brief space of time, reappeared on the slope of a great wave.

Spinner, together with five sailors, was, at this moment, in the boat, and, each man being in his proper place, not the least delay occurred in making an attempt to save the unfortunate one. The gallant mariners bent with a will to their oars, while the steersman, with Spinner, tried to assist the progress of their craft by accommodating the action of their bodies to the forward motion.

The animated black speck, now fighting convulsively for continuance of a wicked life, looked pitifully insignificant when viewed in conjunction with the sky-bounded expanse of high-heaving water. The grand waves came ceaselessly on with racehorse speed, each seeming invested with power outrageously sufficient to sweep away the minute, struggling thing of life. Yet no less than three mountains of water sped past, and succeeded between them only in impelling the striving speck some twenty yards in the direction of the current. Ordinarily, a breathless silence,

it is said, prevails amidst a crowd of humanity when watching the efforts of one or more of their kind to save life in imminent peril, but, on this particular occasion, the spectators on board were one and all animated with the wildest excitement, gesticulating in every conceivable manner, and rending the air with passionate exclamations.

The brave men in the boat who wielded the oars alone were silent; but Spinner and the helmsman maintained a series of encouraging cries, addressed to the strenuous rowers.

A positive fury of human cries resounded upon the deck of the ship as the anxious on-lookers calculated the quickly lessening chances of their wicked brother's escape from the powers of death which encompassed him.

Strange it was, and strongly illustrative of our common powerful instinct, that Spinner, though in his heart loathing the drowning wretch, yet strove to save him from death, even at the risk of his own precious life, while the American, who had vowed that he would kill Stoa with his own hand, was just as busy as his neighbours in exhorting the mercy-inspired crew to redouble their attempts to rescue the hateful being from his position of extreme danger.

All proved in vain; the boat had reached Stoat, and its bow oarsman was actually leaning over, with outstretched arm, to catch the exhausted swimmer, when, at that critical moment, a jealous, mighty billow tossed the puny craft aside, and, with its cresting ridge of foam, struck down upon the unfortunate man's head. He succumbed under the blow, and his fate was sealed for ever.

A roar of disappointment broke from the keenly anxious beholders lining the ship's extemporized bulwark as the sea closed triumphantly over the battled-for man. Then the balked men in the boat, alternately lost to view in the trough of the sea, and distinctly visible upon the summit of some stupendous billow, turned their faces towards the ship in eloquent dumb solicitation for instructions by signal from their commander.

The attentive captain waved his arm with outward motion, as answer to the mute inquiry of his men in the boat, when the oars were again plied with resolute stroke, and the small craft sped upon her course to the second waiting ship.

Stoat was fortunate in the manner of his decease, as regret was generally expressed that the cruel sea had given him his quietus, and

cheated the gallows. It would seem that man, though callous of the spectacle of death occasioned by violence or disease, always experiences distress at the extinguishment of the vital spark by outrage of the elements.

The captain inquired now if any person in the ship had been acquainted with the drowned man. I answered promptly that he had been known to me, whereupon the captain advised me to communicate the account of his fate to his friends, and at the same time to let them know what he had said with regard to the value of the property lost overboard. I secretly resolved to abstain from any notice of Stoa's last words, and to write to my uncle's physician, mentioning only the sad fate of the detestable creature. I was impressed indeed with the opinion that it was advisable to pass over Stoa's hurried statement with regard to the value of his loss, for somehow I had become convinced that the lost bag had contained my uncle's missing diamond, and I thought it would be a right thing on my part to let the poor wretch and his booty pass together at once out of sight and out of mind.

The interest of the idle gazers on board having been brought to its climax, a general move was made from the starboard to the

larboard side of the vessel. The interest now was devoted to the boat making its passage to the opposite ship.

I was leaning, with the rest of my companions, upon the gunwale, gazing intently at the diminutive-looking boat proceeding across the giant-furrowed moving waters intervening betwixt the two ships, when I felt a light touch upon my shoulder, and, wheeling round, beheld the young actress. The sight of the admirable maiden at this time caused me a pang of the deepest anguish, as I remembered that I could not possibly any longer hope to secure her love. I was afforded, however, some comfort in my tribulation by the thought that her wondrous fascination had passively been instrumental in bringing about a restoration of friendship between Spinner and myself. I yielded up my place to her, and stood at her back, with my mind troubled with the thought that sorrow was impending over her.

"What is the matter?" she said, pointing towards the neighbouring ship, and the little boat buffeting with the Atlantic waves.

"A passenger is leaving us," I answered, vaguely, fearful to disclose the news in a breath to this poor girl, whose nerves had lately been severely tried.

"Who?" she inquired, after a pause, with sudden loss of warm tint in her features, gazing with anxious eyes upon the boat which was now lying to under the lee of the companion ship, discharging her passenger.

"Our friend," I answered, desirous of breaking my unwelcome news gently.

"Our friend!" she repeated, with strange absent voice, maintaining her anxious gaze.

"Mr. Spinner?"

"Yes."

Then she turned to look at me with amazed expression, and with almost pleading accents said,—“Why has he gone like that?”

“He has not said,” I answered, with heartfelt pity for my gentle companion.

“Why has he not said?” she plaintively asked, addressing now, as it seemed, the recognized figure in the distant ship.

I endeavoured to relieve the tension of her thoughts by relating that our captain had declared our ship free now of water in the hold, and had promised us fair weather for the rest of our voyage; but I found that my words were addressed to deaf ears.

“Did he say nothing?” she said abruptly, after a long pause, during which her earnest eyes had been fixed upon the waiting ship.

"Did he not leave a word for any one?"

She was at this moment more like some embodied spirit than a living mortal. Her eyes bore in them an absent expression, and her voice sounded as though she spoke unconsciously. Her golden-crowned classic head was uncovered, and the wind seemed to toy and play amorously with her magnificent tresses. While I marvelled at her exceeding loveliness, I was infinitely perplexed in an attempt to conceive what strange manner of man was my friend Spinner, that he had chosen to leave our ship with a secrecy calculated to give deep offence to this proud young beauty, when, according to his own open confession, he loved her with his whole heart and soul.

"Did mamma and I offend him," she continued, with a tone which strangely partook at once of the nature of demand and soliloquy, "that he should go away without bidding us good-bye?"

At this moment a hearty hurrah was raised by the various passengers standing near us at the bulwarks; and the sorrowing maiden and I were conscious that the opposite ship was signalling adieu to us, and that our boat was moving on her return way.

A shout, faintly audible, was given back to us, and as my gentle companion, in the excitement of the moment, stood gazing with parted lips at the leave-taking ship beyond, I directed her attention to the little signal of a white pocket-handkerchief fluttering speck-like upon the black bulwarks fringed now with minified human heads.

"God! It is he," ejaculated the intensely moved girl. Then springing upon a projection at the scuppers she drew forth her own cambric handkerchief, and lowered her hand with it over the gunwale to afford her diminutive signal a similar prominence to that which the one upon the other ship had obtained. "He sees it, I know!" she cried, with highly excited voice.

How she arrived at her conclusion I could not in reason determine; but her little act of self-deception had caused her some happiness, and I sought to strengthen it. "He must see it," said I.

"Yes, yes; he does!" she exclaimed, with a spasmodic laugh. "I can perceive that plainly enough."

"O ciel!" exclaimed a familiar voice at our backs, "Vere goes zat sheep?"

"To England, mamma," answered my fair

companion, with lively animation, still retaining her extemporized signal over the bulwark.

“Ouf, la perfide Angleterre!” exclaimed the little Frenchwoman, vehemently.

“Hush! madam,” said a careworn Englishman, who had evidently fared badly in his native country, but unwilling to remain silent while hearing her reviled.

“Hurrah!” shouted once more the heart-moved emigrants lining the bulwark, waving frantically small articles of apparel above their heads. They cheered, poor faithful souls!—in honour of the land they had left, though they had, in most cases, known only severe hardship in it.

The little Frenchwoman, with natural curiosity, stepped upon some projecting wood-work enabling her to overlook the bulwark, and, anxious to secure for herself participation in the prevailing excitement, she glanced sharply here and there to invite the inspiration, when presently her attention was arrested by the determined action of her daughter. “Que veut dire cela?” she said, nodding her head towards the handkerchief, and looking inquiringly into the anxious girl’s eyes.

“It is for him,” absently returned the maiden.

“ Qui est-il ? ”

“ Mr. Spinner.”

“ Mon Dieu ! ” exclaimed the impulsive little woman, stepping down from her eminence and making a wry face at the deck. “ Elle est amoureuse de cet homme ! ”

We took our sailors on board, and re-slung the boat ; and then getting up steam proceeded upon our course. Every one of the passengers observed a long-continued look-out on the receding ship which had so opportunely come within our hail ; and prominent amidst the interested watchers appeared the graceful young actress. When at length the home-bound craft had been diminished by distance to the apparent size of a sea-mew, the eager gazers in our ship retired one by one to seek some other cause wherewith to engage their interest ; and at length the fair maiden was the only one who remained to watch the parting vessel disappear over the horizon. She retained her handkerchief in her hand to the last ; and when the sea alone met her gaze, she still remained in her watchful attitude.

The little Frenchwoman allowed her daughter to sit undisturbed on the top of the gunwale for nearly two hours, when she went to her, and quietly bade her come and eat.

The maiden slowly shook her head, and, with low, abstracted voice, answered that she was not in the least desirous of food, and that she wished to be left alone.

"Ma fille," said the little Frenchwoman, wagging her head contemplatively, "c'est une drôlerie."

Evening fell soft and clear. The moon rode high overhead, and the sky was deep blue to an extreme intensity. An amazing multitude of stars burned through the resplendent firmament, while low down on the circling horizon lay a fringe of white clouds, shining like silver.

Our ship ploughed her steady way through the waters with a pleasing see-saw motion, which, aided by the regular throb of the machinery, was powerfully lulling in effect upon the senses. The dark waves rolled by without sound, beyond the rhythmical splash upon each dip of the cleaving prow, and the great ocean was chequered, far and near, with masses of twinkling light and solemn shadow.

The greater number of the passengers, though never having before witnessed such a majestic spectacle as the one presented now by the meeting of sky and sea, yet were

indifferent concerning it, and preferred remaining in the cabin, talking together, and playing at cards.

The ship's officers, who were familiar with grand exhibitions of Nature, were, nevertheless, now all tempted to come out on deck, to delight their souls with the silent contemplation of the majesty above and around them.

I felt reverently grateful for the calmness which now fell like a subtle balm upon my spirit out of the God-like concord prevailing amidst the forces ruling the earth. The purifying feeling increased within me, and I became fearfully conscious of my immortal being hymning a praiseful canticle to the inscrutable Power of powers.

Presently I conceived the thought that the magnificence existing in and about the world was surely intended to impress man with high sentiments and aspirations, and then I became filled with the desire to make amends in my future life for the petty self-seeking of my life of the past. Animated by this good resolve, I was pacing the moon-illumined deck, when suddenly I espied the fair companion of my pilgrimage, sitting quite alone upon the poop, gazing with dreamy eyes out upon the solemn and splendid night.

I advanced towards the fair reverist, and disturbed her composure with the request that I might be allowed to speak with her for a little while. She quietly answered that I was welcome to speak with her for a short time—but only for a short time.

“You were in deep thought,” I said, sitting down beside her upon the planks, and resting my back against the capstan.

“Yes,” she replied, softly, her lips only moving, “I was in deep thought.”

“I have something very particular to say to you.”

“So I have; but it has no peace in it.”

I was silent for a few moments, and then, finding the courage which I required, I spoke out, asking my gentle companion if I had her permission to address her in delicate confidence.

“Yes,” she murmured, unhesitatingly, to my great joy and pride. “And I am certain that you will say nothing for yourself at this moment. I am able to bear no additional trouble upon my mind just now.”

The moonlight was resting full upon the contemplative fair one, and exhibited her face unusually pale. Her sweet, sad eyes now bore in them a yearning look. While I pitied

her for the feeling which was manifestly vexing her mind, I could not help feeling some little pity for myself.

"Shall I try to speak to you in French?" said I, with considerate thought.

"Why not in English?"

"Because a man is near us—the man at the wheel."

"Oh! you need not fear that man," said the gentle one, with a favouring smile, addressed towards the unconscious gubernator. "He is a true sailor."

"Ah! that means much."

"Yes, very much."

"Are you aware," I said, with palpitating heart, forcing myself to say that which I knew would make an end of my own poor glimmering hope at once and for ever—"are you aware that James Spinner is a true sailor?"

Eve fetched her breath, when I mentioned the name of the man who had lately claimed all her thoughts, and now she glanced aside at me in a manner which was certainly not encouraging to my purpose. "I suppose," said she, presently, contracting her brows, and plucking nervously at her dress, "I suppose he makes an amusement of his sailing, just as he does of many other serious things."

"I can tell you of one serious thing, which he has no thought to amuse himself with."

"And pray what is that honoured thing?"

My courage was not equal to my self-appointed office. Though I was anxious to make my revelation, and have done with the duty of keeping alive my own delusive little flame of hope, I lacked the strength to perform my intended sacrifice upon the altar of philanthropy.

"I will tell you at another time," I faltered, feeling myself suddenly deprived of strength and fortitude.

"Tell me now," resolutely said my fair confidante, "I insist upon it."

I looked up into the aërial depths all glorious with hosts of glittering spheres, and again below upon the great, deep ocean, and the grand spectacle invoked within my mind the thought that I was pitifully out of harmony with true nature, that I was even hesitating to conclude an act of positive duty.

Being thus stimulated, I turned again to my fair companion, and, without reserve, made known to her what Spinner had said to me with regard to the state of his feelings towards her; and, furthermore, I stated my belief that his abrupt departure from our ship

was due entirely to his conflicting thoughts upon the subject of his newly inspired tender passion.

My fair idol sat perfectly still for several minutes after I had finished my heart-stirring communication, and during that interval of silence her eyes swept, as mine had done, the majestic heavens above and the sea beneath, and gradually there came upon her exquisite features an expression of gladness and elevation of soul which caused her to appear in perfect unison with the prevailing sentiment of the interdependent scene.

"Why do you tell me this?" at length she said, turning to look upon me with eyes of beaming kindness.

"Because," I answered, with determination to speak out plainly, "I think it will afford you happiness, and I am anxious to see you smile again."

"Oh, Frank Amor!" she said, with low, mellifluous voice, stroking my hand softly and slidingly, "I had no idea that you loved me so nobly. I wish I had the power to confer happiness upon you."

"You have that power, and you have already exercised it."

"In what way?"

"In assuring me, by your eloquent expression, that my present communication has given you comfort."

She tried to speak to me again, but her voice failed her in the attempt. Then she turned aside her head, and wept in the fulness of her heart.

I gently moved now to arise, and leave her to the uninterrupted enjoyment of her tender thoughts; but she signified, by a motion of her hand, that she desired me to remain.

I yielded obedience to her will, and sat quietly with her while she sought to compose her suddenly agitated feelings. Now as I sat calmly contemplating the two grand creations, which are without change since the beginning, my mind seemed to be purified of the narrow selfishness and petty cares which had hitherto oppressed it. I felt at peace with myself, and through myself with the rest of the world.

"Dear friend," at length said my gentle companion, startling me in the midst of my soul-moving reverie, taking my hand in hers, and looking with earnest friendliness full into my face, "you encourage me to speak my mind to you. I have long known that you loved me, but I have hitherto only laughed at your attentions, and sometimes I have felt

annoyed at them. I have, too, in the days previous to this eventful voyage, entertained a great aversion for Mr. Spinner; and, besides, have thought that pure love and disinterested friendship—such as we read of in books—existed only in imagination. Now all is changed with me, and that, too, very, very much for the better, for I am quite converted to the faith which maintains that chivalry, knightly love, and true friendship are all as active now as ever in the world. You have discovered for yourself, dear friend, that James Spinner has won my heart, and you have succeeded, by your nobly kind conduct, in making me very, very happy.”

“Then, Eve, I have succeeded in the chief desire of my heart.”

“But you must remember what I have said with regard to Mr. Spinner.”

“I bear that clearly in mind.”

“And will my happiness be enough reward for you?”

“Amplly sufficient.”

She raised my hand, and touched it lightly with her warm lips. That strange touch awakened the knowledge within me that I had obtained the inestimable blessing of a true friend through my poor act of lovingkindness.

"Leave me now," she said, softly, "I wish to be alone for a little while. And, perhaps," she added, smiling through her tears of joy, "it may be to indulge in a good cry—woman like, you know."

I left her, and sought the company of the ship's officers. I passed a remarkably pleasant hour with two noble-souled sons of the ocean, and then retired to rest in a better frame of mind than I had ever enjoyed in my life.

CHAPTER VII.

THE duty of continuing this narrative to its end has devolved upon me. I am the individual named James Spinner, whose sayings and doings have been recorded by Mr. Frank Amor with Boswellian prosiness. To confess the truth, my present task is but indifferently suited to my taste. I presume that the reader on finding another hand taking up the thread of this long-spun tale, will imagine that the original discursive digits are either paralyzed or *quite* dead. I consider it my duty, therefore, to promptly assure him or her that our mutual friend, Amor, is in good health and spirits.

Though I am not prepared to afford any definite explanation as to why Amor does not himself continue his pathetic story, I shall not, I fancy, be hitting wide of the mark to state that the well-wishers of the simply conscientious young fellow, in persuading him to entrust to my hands the difficult and thankless business of carrying his verbose dissertation forward

ad infinitum, were animated by the well-grounded apprehension that it would be concluded only with his life.

With these explanatory remarks, I will now "leave off my damnable faces and begin."

To imitate the stagy modesty of my friend, who, by the way, at the close of the performance wherein we both played a part, invites the audience to bestow on me alone the whole of the applause, and in return requests it to give its entire approbation to him, I have to state that I am not entitled to the honour my too-generous friend proposes for me, in regard to my abrupt departure from the storm-beaten ship. I was not animated by any splendid spirit of self-abnegation. I had merely proposed for myself some exciting relaxation; but, after the first few days of the storm, I discovered suddenly that my feelings had become desperately serious, and that all inclination for amusement had left me.

Amor was bound on an errand which will doubtless be considered by the greater number of critics one of extreme folly. He had abandoned a position of sybaritic nature to follow up a wild-goose chase which necessitated his accepting much hardship and disappointment.

When I parted with him on board ship, I

was quite aware that severe trouble lay in store for him; and, though I pitied him, I was confident that the enterprise would make a man of him.

When I saw him fairly on the wing for the land of sharp practice, I felt perfectly assured that he was destined to have his eyes opened, and to some purpose. The poor fellow was hopeful of finding in Yankeedom the absence of the "lust for gold," which, he said, had become epidemic in old England. I felt quite unconcerned at his remarkably simple article of faith, for I was confident that his disillusionment would not rot but ripen his excellent natural morals.

A propos of natural morals, whenever I see any lady or gentleman slinking across the boards of the theatre, and I hear from her or him that she or he is in receipt of a damnable wrong, and that, therefore, she or he is suddenly converted into a very devil, I invariably feel that the damnable wrong was not at all necessary, but a little superfluous.

Amor seems to describe, at great length, the storm that tossed us about the Atlantic, and particularly mentions the measures adopted to lighten the ship. I am of opinion he was guilty somewhat of selfishness in refusing to add his

play to the articles delivered overboard, for it was by far the heaviest thing in the vessel.

It was a tedious voyage home for me, and, but for the excruciating pain I suffered with my damaged arm, I should have been terribly bored.

As soon as I had got settled comfortably again in my chambers, I looked up my friend Ned Amor. The genial, fat fellow welcomed me with his usual cordiality and roughness. When I first came upon him at his hotel, he was in serious conference with the *chef*, whom he was instructing in the art of preparing a pillau, a dish of which mutton and rice are the principal ingredients. My love-sick Falstaffian friend stated his deuced fondness for it, and I think I made the remark that hopeful signs were at length observable of his recovery from his late love-fever. The patient sighed, and answered, softly, that he considered it his duty always to keep his body well nourished, in order that he might the better bear up against adverse fate. He inquired anxiously after his brother, and then declared it was his conviction that Frank would be starved out of America ere twelve months had elapsed. "He has no friends there, you know, to fall back

upon," he concluded, with a thoughtful wag of his head.

"In that case he must fall back upon himself," I remarked carelessly.

"It strikes me," said my big friend, with trenchant wit, "that Frank has no self either to fall back upon." This inspired sally afforded a good laugh to its author, and, I blush to confess, to myself.

After very satisfactory refreshment, Ned proposed that we should pay Miss Magnet a visit, she having returned to town lately. Being in easy temper, I consented, although I anticipated only a waspish reception from the old spinster. I feared that my hopeful companion would experience more vexation of spirit than joy from the visit, and so I think it proved. We were, I knew, regarded as evil genii, who had prompted the two interesting babes in the wood to give the slip to their darkly scheming uncles, and take their chance in the pitiless world.

"I am afraid," said I to my companion, as we were proceeding on our way to Eaton Place, "we shall scarcely find favour with the old lady, now that Frank is not of the party."

"I cannot agree with you there," was his

confident reply. "I expect Frank has put his foot in it this time. I thought he would at last."

I could not help thinking that we had succeeded very creditably in doing the same for ourselves; however, I said nothing.

Poor Ned fairly lost heart when we came in sight of our goal. He seemed so loth to make further progress in the proper direction, that I judged it advisable to fortify him with a glass of brandy. He seemed deeply grateful. The dose, however, was not sufficient of strength or quantity, I am afraid; for a second attack of apprehension overpowered the poor fellow upon our arrival at the street-door of Miss Magnet's house. It was a very severe attack.

Upon the stout sufferer's revival, he wildly proposed that we should inquire for Miss Ellice, and in the event of her being "not at home," that we should walk off. I was amused at the earnestness he displayed, both in his tone and manner; but this, a passing delirium only, I disregarded, as I did his request. In fact, I had promised myself a little fun from the coming encounter betwixt my big comrade and the venerable shrew, and I felt wickedly pleased when, to my inquiry, the man-servant answered that his mistress was at home.

"I am Mr. Frank Amor's brother," said Edward, by way of explanation, I suppose, to the man, who seemed to peruse his card somewhat attentively, and, I thought, rather superciliously.

"Oh, indeed!" replied the servant, who then went to announce our presence.

After being kept waiting some five or six minutes, we were requested to walk upstairs to the drawing-room. Poor big Ned was in a positive tremor of excitement, and seemed to lose every power of mind and muscle, when a white flash across the ledge above us proclaimed the fact that some young lady had flitted from out the drawing-room, and had passed through the opposite doorway. "That's her!" he gasped, somewhat regardless of Lindley Murray.

From this I divined that Miss Ellice had appeared for an instant to his straining eyes. We found the antique maiden sitting bolt upright upon a curious, high-backed chair, supporting herself from the front with her witch-like staff.

Bad luck, that mocking, unholy imp invisible, it seems had followed in our wake, and had entered the house for a little diversion. Directly my agitated friend essayed to seat himself,

in obedience to the snappish behest of our hostess, the frail chair selected by him—of course the smallest in the room—bent, cracked, and broke up into detachments under his elephantine weight. As may be imagined, the owner of this infirm thing of upholstery was much pleased and diverted.

“Take the sofa, man!” screamed the *dear* old lady, observing poor Ned casting his eyes about to discover some chair which might be trusted to withstand a pressure of seventeen stone. “Take the sofa. There is not a chair in the room that will not go to pieces under your terrible weight.” As she performed her high-pitched concerto, she jerked at the bell-rope furiously.

When our friend the man-servant appeared, she bade him take away the wrecked seat to get it mended. The man stood for a few seconds, absently surveying the broken chair; whereupon the ancient termagant furiously demanded him to say if he considered himself competent to do the required job. The luckless devil returned no answer, but scampered precipitately out of the room, bearing the disconnected bars with him. “So you two saw the crazy young fool off, did you?” continued the amiable ancient dame, bestowing upon us.

alternately a hawk-like look. "And you never offered him one word of good counsel, eh?"

"I parted with him at the railway station," said Edward, smiling wanly.

"And I parted with him in the middle of the Atlantic."

"Oh, indeed!" said the shrew, with sharp humour. "And did you swim back?"

I could not help feeling a certain respect for her on finding that age had not dulled her keenness and spirit. I proceeded to explain that I had taken an unexpected opportunity to return home, as my arm had been injured.

"And how did you get it injured, may I ask?" she inquired.

"It was one of many accidents of the storm we encountered."

"Oh! you encountered a storm, eh?" she exclaimed, shaking her head solemnly. "I don't wonder at it!"

"My brother," said Edward, by way of a sop to Cerberus, "is behaving himself very foolishly, I think."

"He is mad, stark mad!" returned the old dame, sharply. Then she again addressed me. "Is the young Bedlamite going to marry the person whom he has taken up with?"

I could not pass over this disrespectful allusion to a perfectly honourable girl. I spoke out with a degree of firmness which was not without its effect upon this bitter octogenarian.

"Why, then, does the silly young man chase your paragon," she said, "if, as you say, he receives no encouragement?"

"Because, at present, madam, he knows not his own mind."

"And you, knowing this, allowed him to go unwarned to his ruin?"

It was, I plainly perceived, quite useless for me to attempt to convince this bigoted old spinster that her *protégé* would probably be none the worse for his wild-goose chase. I told her, that so far from not playing Mentor to her precious young Telemachus, I had even stated to him my belief that his escapade would entoughen the fibre of both his mental and physical constitution.

"You have all conspired to mislead my poor boy!" cried the doting old dame, with great emotion. "Your abominable connivance will bring my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!"

"By God, madam!" burst out my soft-hearted companion, starting to his feet, "I vow I will, at your command, go off instanter, and fetch back my brother to you."

This declaration roused the old lady from her weak despondency. She stared for a few seconds resentfully at her would-be friend, and then scornfully bade him resume his seat and not trouble himself upon her account. Her conduct at this moment thoroughly convinced me that, though foolish to a degree in her attachment for the wayward deserter, she was capable of entertaining very unamiable feelings towards any one unwittingly offending her.

"So you don't think, sir, that Frank Amor will ever marry this actress?" she inquired sternly of me, after snarling contemptuously at poor Ned for quietly sitting down again as he had been commanded.

"It is my opinion, madam, that your dear Frank Amor will never marry this actress," I answered, annoyed at her persistent dedication of honour to the young man at the expense of the young woman. "And for this simple reason—he will never have the chance."

"Oh, indeed!" she returned drily, fixing a searching glance upon my face.

"I believe so, madam."

"Then do you think he will return soon to us?"

"Yes; I think he will return by-and-by."

"What does your by-and-by mean?"

"In his case? Oh—a couple of years."

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated the octogenarian in dismay.

Edward, with kindly intent, hazarded the opinion that his brother would find his way back to his old quarters probably before two months had elapsed.

The hard old dame glared savagely at the speaker, and bade him remember that she desired the truth, not opinion.

The poor fellow looked terribly crest-fallen. He must at this moment have come to the conclusion that further conversation on his part was inadvisable, for he sank back upon the cushions of the sofa, and lay for the rest of the interview calmly contemplating the ceiling—as though he hoped to attain by that act the Buddhistic felicity of comatose quiet.

The old lady also became lost in abstraction, and now a tomb-like silence prevailed. I waited passively for some five or six minutes, and then, finding no signs of "coming to" on the part of my companions, I deemed it advisable to upset my chair. The venerable one started nervously at the sudden noise.

In answer to my apology for startling her, she remarked, in a very spiteful manner, that surely my companion and I were used to sitting

on boxes instead of chairs, and proceeded—
“Reverting to our original subject, did Frank Amor speak of me at all to you when on board ship?”

“Over and over again,” I answered, delighted that I could honestly say something which would afford pleasure.

“Poor fellow!” she murmured. The indulgent old soul had evidently taken Amor so thoroughly to her heart, that no unkind conduct he could be guilty of seemed capable of alienating him from her affection. “Are you really his friend?” she said, after a pause, looking at me with an almost unearthly glare.

“Yes, I am indeed his friend.”

“Then advise him to return home at once.”

“Well, when I know from him where to write to, I will communicate with him to that effect.”

“I shall trust you.”

“I, too, shall advise him to return home,” said Edward, making a last overture for peace.

“No, no!” cried the prejudiced old dame, superciliously, “don’t trouble yourself. I will not accept assistance from you—a mere bird of passage!”

I perceived that she was now exhausted, so I rose to take my leave, my example being

followed by my disconcerted comrade with much alacrity. He stammered out a request that he might be allowed to call again to see Miss Ellice.

"It would be preferable that you should leave your message with me," was the sharp reply. "What is it that you want me to tell her?"

"I can hardly say to you," faltered poor Ned, whose face was scarlet, "er—what I intend, you know, for another lady."

"Then don't come here again with *that* purpose," the shrew hissed out, with a glance at the poor fellow which so frightened him that, without pausing to make any parting obeisance, he fled precipitately out of the room.

"I shall write to her," said he to me desperately, as we proceeded together downstairs. "I won't stand being bullied out of my chance by that spiteful old cat, I can tell you."

By a happy freak of fortune, no sooner had we descended than Miss White appeared at the foot of the stairs. She was looking perfectly charming with her blushing complexion and bright eyes. I greeted her cordially, and then took the liberty of introducing my admiring friend. Our conversation turning upon the

subject of Ceylon—owing to my having mentioned that the presented was a magnate of that remote island—Miss White explained that she had a maternal uncle there, and that it was not unlikely that she should sooner or later pay him a visit. Edward was much interested at this intelligence, and upon learning that the said uncle was named “Russell,” and held a property styled “Palm Grove,” his interest increased to positive exultation.

“What!” he cried, touching the young lady’s arm with his fat fingers. “Your uncle old Russ—Mr. Russell, of Palm Grove! By—the Lord Harry! This is news, indeed, to stagger a fellow. Why, your uncle and I are near neighbours and fast friends!”

“How nice,” said the pretty, fresh-looking girl, with a glance delivered sideways, which proved even still more effective than her news to stagger a certain fellow.

I am certain that my impressionable friend would have succeeded in tiring out this attractive young lady’s patience, had I not taken care to sound the note of retreat in good time. As it was, he was fortunate enough to receive an invitation from the fair one to visit her mamma at Croydon.

“I know mamma will be very pleased to

meet her brother's friend," she intimated at parting, as she shot out another glance at the admiring leviathan, which fairly went straight to his heart.

"Upon my word!" he uttered, as he was proceeding with me along the street.

I was not quite able to determine what he was thinking of, when he came out with his curious ejaculation; though, to judge from the foolish expression which rested upon his features, I should say that he was marvelling at some queer feeling which had suddenly seized him.

"A fine girl, Miss White, eh?" said I to him, after a pause of about a quarter of an hour.

"A 1," he answered, with an admiring, reflective nod of his head.

"You couldn't do better, Ned."

"You think that, do you?" suggested he, rousing from his reverie, and looking approvingly into my face. "Well, old boy, we must talk that over at another time." Then he administered to me a playful, but by no means a pleasant, poke in my ribs, adding the words,—"And now for a drink."

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAD been in London a fortnight since my return from the sea, when I was greatly surprised at having a visit paid me by a gentleman, who announced himself the physician attending Mr. Gall, of Chelsea.

“My patient wishes particularly to see you,” said he, gravely. “I have conveyed the message personally to you, in order that I might urge you to favour it.”

I answered that my feelings were decidedly averse to any conference with the individual in question; and when, in explanation of my objection, I referred to the circumstances of my last meeting with the hateful recluse, it surprised me to find that his medical attendant had not heard before this of the disturbance which had then occurred.

“He is now suffering from a severe stroke of paralysis,” intimated the medical man, thoughtfully. “That will account for it—that, and other things beside. Will you humour the old man?”

This request was altogether disagreeable to me, but I could not rightly refuse it, when I learned from my visitor that the moribund desired to speak with me concerning his offending nephew. Allowing myself no time to grow sick over the thought of this visit to the animated mummy in his dreadful cave of despair, I started off at once, in company with his physician.

When we arrived at our destination, I was conscious of an increased air of gloom pervading the place, and I began to feel a creeping sensation in my flesh; and when presently I entered the library, and noted the host of damnable things standing about here and there, or suspended by chains from the ceiling, I grew so horribly disgusted, that it was with great difficulty that I restrained myself from making havoc of all the unlovely lot. I observed the old man sitting heaped up in his cushioned seat; and so frightfully unnatural did he appear, that it would scarce have astonished me had I been told that he had been moving upon this world for centuries.

Poor wretch! He was all in a quiver from head to foot, though evidently still unsubdued in spirit. I took a chair near him, when, by some extraordinary process, he revived suffi-

ciently to speak with spasmodic energy. He first addressed to me a few bitter words in reference to our former meeting, and then, after a short pause, during which he indulged in a low, unholy chuckle, he went on to say, that he supposed I knew he had deputed the most faithful of his servants to attend his nephew in his wanderings.

I hastened to tell the spiteful old fellow that his knave was by this time no doubt eaten up by the unfastidious fishes.

"Eh? What's that?" uttered he, disliking my news, and looking at me aghast.

"Your precious knave fell overboard, and was drowned," I explained, rather pleased at being provided with such depressing news. The wicked old man called huskily to his medical attendant for some drink. He chuckled no more.

"Are you of any particular creed?" inquired he, upon recovering from the shock occasioned at hearing of his villain's untimely fate.

Now this was a question which I did not feel myself in the least bound to answer, so I paid simply no heed to it. The old man, however, would not rest without an answer to his uncivil question, which he repeated. The phy-

sician addressed an appealing sign to me. Yielding my scruples, I answered the old moribund that I was a Protestant.

"Protestant!" he uttered, with a ghastly sneer. "The narrowest creed in the world!"

I was unwilling to discuss theology with this man, who had obtained so dismally little comfort from the faith which he had selected for his own; but his ugly sneer so annoyed me, that I spoke up in defence of my accepted creed. I said I believed the Protestant or Catholic reformed religion to be the most ennobling of all the forms of religion in the world, for, while the Hindoo, Confucian, Mahometan, Roman Catholic, and Judaic faiths come down to their respective disciples at second-hand, so to say, being derived originally from agents of purely human origin, the Protestant creed proceeded directly from the Most High Himself to man.

"Is not my nephew a Protestant?" inquired the good hater, with peculiar intonation. He did not explain his question; but I could perceive that he meant to discredit the religion by reason of its numbering the abandoned Frank Amor amongst its votaries.

I felt strongly indisposed to protract my interview with this crazy old fellow, and gave

him to understand that I had lent him my company with the idea solely that he wished to arrange, with my co-operation, some business having relation to his nephew. "I cannot appreciate your abstruse speculations," I concluded, imitating his ugly sneer; "I must therefore ask you to confine yourself to statements of a plain and practical nature."

"I have made my will!" he screamed, with sudden excitement, shaking his loose-jointed hands up and down, and grimacing in a very shocking manner. "I have given nothing to my nephew. I have left all to found a new temple at Benares, to the honour of the goddess Lakshmi. All! all!" he uttered, with a changed, whining voice, now wringing his wasted hands together. "I shall be true to her, though she has not been true to me."

My feelings were almost harrowed at sitting in this awful chamber, and hearing this dying old sinner boast of having dedicated his ill-gotten wealth to the service of a pagan religion. I interrupted him as he was proceeding to express his rancorous feeling towards his younger nephew, stating decisively that I should at once take my leave of him, unless he had anything to say to me of sufficient importance to detain me.

"Importance!" he echoed, with shrill, emotional pipe, bestowing upon me a blank stare, as though he were astounded.

The slight compassion which I had felt for the hoary villain passed from my breast when I remembered the abominable misuse he had made of his entire life. "What do you desire me to do for you?" I inquired, sternly.

He peered up at me keenly, as I stood erect beside him. He continued to gaze into my face, in the most curious manner, for so long, without uttering a syllable, that I repeated my question. Presently, bowing low, in Oriental fashion, he murmured these singular words, with the deepest emotion and reverence,—“You came and destroyed my mortal dream of happiness. You will come again to destroy my body!”

Being totally unable to comprehend the meaning of these somewhat mystic remarks, and deeming the old wretch mad, I directed a look of inquiry at the silent physician.

“I cannot say what he means by the first part of his statement,” whispered that gentleman; “but I am confident that the second part of it refers to his unaccountable conviction that you are destined to incinerate his body.”

“I would do that for him with the most fiendish delight,” I thought. “A queer hallu-

ination, doctor," I remarked, with a forced laugh.

"Yes. He is so possessed by it that I think it would be well to humour it."

The demented old man, still preserving his reverent posture towards me, continued in rapid monotone, "Fire is God. Fire is God. The immortal, unchangeable soul of the universe. Let my metamorphosis be accomplished by means of fire, most powerful agent of the Great Soul!"

"It shall be done," I returned, with mock solemnity, "at sea, at dead of night."

"Yes, I know full well thou art appointed to waft me up to the heavens of Indra," the old maniac continued, regarding me with increased awe and reverence. Being convinced that he was quite deranged in his mind, I left the infernal house, and right glad was I when I again scented the fresh air. I don't wonder now that my friend Frank was so weak in the head sometimes as he had shown himself when with me.

The physician and I returned to town together. On the road he told me that the hateful old man's last hour was near at hand.

"You will scarcely undertake to incinerate his body, I presume?" he asked, smiling.

“Won’t I, though?” I answered, in the familiar manner of my school-days. It then occurred to me that, whenever I had used that curious phrase, I was always in earnest.

CHAPTER IX.

I FOUND the *rôle* of apologist for Frank Amor, which had now fallen to my lot, one by no means of so easy and pleasant a nature as I had anticipated. At first, upon several occasions, I was so thoroughly dissatisfied with my new office, that more than once I seriously meditated upon the advisability of disengaging myself from it; but, strange to say, in time I began to enjoy its difficulties and disagreeables.

I called at the Rectory. After a little skilful pleading, I softened good old Mr. Ellice's heart towards the young madman, who had abandoned his bed of roses to throw himself upon the tender mercy of this unregenerate world. Of course, as may be imagined, Mrs. Ellice was not to be mollified. If I made any effect upon her, it was to increase her original virulence against the luckless youth. If it be to a man's credit to have a bitter enemy, Amor may be considered singularly worthy of praise, for this lady certainly hated him with all the spirit and rancour of which she was capable.

Nothing of any special importance occurred during my visit, and I shall not dwell further upon it, but proceed to describe briefly certain events in relation to Captain Melrose, in which I was concerned.

Frank Amor remarks upon my strong aversion to the profligate captain, but he does not make any mention of my admiration for that individual. Now, taking it for granted that a man may entertain towards another antipathy and admiration at one and the same time, I go on confidently to state that the Captain earned my dislike by his utter disregard of honour, and compelled my esteem by his undoubted right to rank as a first-rate soldier. Being chronically impecunious, and greatly disliking his affliction, and seeing no straight road towards fortune open to him, he resorted to some rather unlawful expedients to put money in his purse. He was often in trouble, but somehow always managed to extricate himself successfully from his predicament. In his recent case of difficulty, though the chances seemed dead against him, he was attended eventually by his usual luck. I even rejoiced at this good fortune in his last scrape. I regarded the indictment as an illustration of the old maxim, which declares that "any stick

is good enough to beat a dog with." The authorities had been so very often disappointed in their attempts to net the Captain, that when the notice was given them that a diamond was missing from a house which he visited, they were prompted to remembrance of an old affair, wherein some thievish Jews and the Captain figured together—I need scarcely add, not much to the credit of any one of the pack. Evidence was again found wanting in this attempt to secure the wary old soldier, and the case broke down, leaving him with his honour somewhat further tarnished, but with his abused constitution greatly improved. "I am off to the land of liberty," he said to me on his enlargement. "I must let England lie fallow for a season."

He was, I thought, a very fit subject for America—the sanctum of the Ishmaelites of all nations. It was, however, my particular desire that this member of the Ishmaelitish family should not betake himself off to the land of liberty, but rather should continue to honour England with his presence. I condescended to hold counsel with the vagabond on the subject. I offered him the privilege of drawing upon my bankers the sum of six pounds per month for a period extending over

twelve calendar months, subject to the condition that he drew the money personally.

"Never, by G—d!" cried the Captain, in answer to my offer. "Never, while I live, sir!"

By that high-toned expression the sorry fellow meant to convey that he was not willing to accept my bribe, the condition of which rendered it necessary for him to remain in his native land. I presume he saw himself prevented from following to America, and sponging upon, his long-suffering niece and her mother.

"I will give you five minutes to think over my offer," said I, perceiving that my man was really disposed to accept my terms. "After that time I shall withdraw it for good."

"Oh, come!" he responded, "you are too sharp upon me. I think you ought to allow me twelve hours for consideration."

I knew that his request was tantamount to a decision in favour of my offer. I, therefore, readily granted him his desired interim of grace. He would be able, I considered, to get along pretty comfortably with six pounds per month added to his existing governmental pension. The graceless fellow, it is true, smoked and drank all day long; but then he

did so very frequently at the expense of others. He also gambled as often as the chance for so doing occurred; but in that pursuit he was constrained to confine his speculations to very contracted limits, and he was not disposed to be too scrupulous in his gaming operations. The Captain was not in the least likely to overlook the advantages which were offered him by his consent to my proposal. When I quitted his company I felt quite certain that I should presently be called upon to sacrifice a portion of my fortune.

CHAPTER X.

THREE weeks after the date of my visit at the house of Amor's crazed uncle, I received an intimation from his physician that the miserable old man had given up the ghost. It happened that about this time a particular friend of mine bought a handy steam-yacht. He declared to me that he he was fired with ambition to navigate the White Sea—though whether the word fired in connexion with the White Sea was strictly applicable I could not discern. I conceived the notion of asking my friend's permission to carry out by means of his yacht my extraordinary promise to the old man now deceased. He made no objection to my strange request; but stipulated that I should keep all present knowledge of the incinerative proceedings from the knowledge of his sailors. Thereupon I engaged some fellows for certain work at the ghostly house at Chelsea, and set about making some arrangements in relation to my contemplated voyage to the northern main. Late in

the evening of the second day after that when my friend had agreed to let me share his sea-trip, I went down to Chelsea, and met my hirelings just coming out of Amor's old lodging. They were then bearing with them a large packing-box, coated over with a thick layer of pitch. This box they put into a covered van, and conveyed it straight on to my friend's yacht.

Knowing the whereabouts of the rascal Chund, and feeling anxious to make the unmitigated scoundrel undergo some penalty for his misdeeds, I looked him up and engaged him as a stoker to the yacht. I also contracted with him that he should act as chief agent in certain rites which were to be performed on the lonely shores of Lapland.

I had never yet visited the White Sea, but I was perfectly certain that it was cold and dreary enough to chill the sun-loving, treacherous Indian to his very marrow. I conceived that the wretch's sufferings, induced by the somewhat low temperature of these regions, would serve as a fitting punishment for his many gross acts of devildom.

The day previous to that of my departure for the Northern Seas, I saw Edward Amor, who informed me that he intended to apply to the Court to set aside the trusts of his uncle's

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will, upon the ground that the testator was not of sound mind at the time of execution. I felt quite certain that the objection would be admitted ; and, on learning that no other will was known to exist, I was gratified by the anticipation that the nephews would, after all, receive the benefit of their late unnatural relative's fortune. Edward was not governed by the scruples entertained by his brother. He seemed quite indifferent to the fact that the money had been amassed by crooked means. The easy fellow declared himself quite willing to take all he could get of the old ogre's property, and go on his way rejoicing. He then informed me, with much gusto, that he had paid a visit to Miss White's parent at Croydon, and had been treated to a kind of scone, compounded by the hands of the young lady herself. This comestible my friend described as of such rare merit that the mere remembrance of it was sufficient to provoke the most insatiable cravings within him. "That Miss White is a prodigy!" he concluded, with low, deliberative voice.

It was now quite evident to me that the young lady of Croydon had succeeded in making captive this interesting wanderer's heart, and, as I surveyed his gigantic proportions, I

was amazed at the courage of the fair one in addressing herself to bring him under her yoke.

"Is Mary White going this season to Ceylon?" I gravely inquired.

"I cannot say as to that," replied poor Ned, drily, staring at me with curious eyes.

He was now, I could plainly perceive, animated with the anxious speculation whether I was really privileged to refer to the young lady in question by her Christian name, or had only acted in accordance with my usual forwardness.

I was at this time taking a glass of wine with Ned, and as I observed that my wicked expression had caused him secret offence, I entertained the intention of explaining before parting that I had spoken with advised familiarity in my allusion to Mary White. On second thought, however, I concluded to leave the matter as it stood originally, with the trust that it would act as a spur to the self-indulgent fellow's inclinations. Pillaus, scones, and alcoholic drinks were, I considered, all very attractive, and my big friend, loving these dainties with his whole heart, ran in considerable peril of overtaxing his gastronomic capabilities some fine day, and therefore it was imminently advisable that he

should speedily be provided with a guardian angel. Now I was certain that Miss White possessed the requisite firmness enabling her to restrain the Anglo-Indian Lucullus's persistent abuse of the duty of nutrifying himself. By letting him believe me his rival, there would be the zest of competition added to his pursuit.

When I parted with my ingenuous friend, I was inwardly assured that the clever young lady who had lately made for his delectation so remarkably toothsome a scone would, in all probability, behold him again ere another day had passed.

CHAPTER XI.

I WRITE now at a time nearly twelve months after the date of my parting with Frank Amor in the middle of the Atlantic.

My cruise to the North occupied the whole summer and autumn seasons. I sailed along the entire western seaboard of Norway, round the lonely North Cape, and through the White Sea to Archangel. During that cruise, which I made in my friend's yacht, I visited many ports, and also many places not ports. I passed the winter in the Muscovy provinces, and though the climate of these regions is rigorous enough, I should say, to freeze a man's blood if he neglect to take frequent exercise, and drink water instead of oil, I not only escaped distress from it, but managed to thrive in it to very substantial purpose. I shall not speak of my doings in Northern Russia. Indeed the record would necessarily be confined to a description of heroical performances in that business of life which was once so well attended to by my good friend, the Anglo-Indian Nabob.

I returned to London in the latter part of the spring, when I received the very sad news that Mrs. Ellice had died early in the season from an attack of bronchitis.

As soon as I got some imperative arrangements made, I went down to the Rectory to offer my condolence to the minister in his great bereavement. The good gentleman received me, to my painful surprise, with embarrassment, and as he grew more perplexed in his manner towards me the longer I remained with him, I was at length provoked to request him to state what was the matter between us. The good gentleman, on being thus challenged, proceeded, with deep emotion, to impart to me the startling and disagreeable intelligence that his late wife, at her last hour, had tried to induce their daughter to promise that she never would accept the hand of Frank Amor. Failing to obtain such a promise from the girl, she had then solemnly enjoined upon her to accept my hand if I should offer it within twelve months.

I positively admired the grand illustration of indomitable will thus exhibited by the late mistress of the Rectory on her death-bed, and at the same time I could not help thinking that Amor had a very difficult problem before him

in regard to his prospects in the spiritual state.

"She has gone to a better place," cried the rector, in a sudden spasm of grief. "I know that."

Now it was altogether distasteful to me to hear lugubrious sentiment from the lips of this naturally joyous man, and I rallied him with the exhortation to try and live his life out with a dutiful enjoyment.

"Ah!" he answered, with a most pitiful sigh, "I cannot recover peace while my dear girl remains in sorrow."

I determined to set things straight here without delay, and I proceeded, with that amiable intent, to ask my host to grant me a private interview with his daughter.

The good man started nervously to his feet on hearing my request, and presently, with a manner of anxiety quite painful to witness, intimated to me that I should probably find the young lady in the garden. I could see that the honest gentleman deplored my presumed hard-hearted intention, and I pitied him. Yet I would not then yield him any relief to his apprehension, for I considered that he was deserving of some sharp punishment for his failure of duty towards his daughter at the

moment when the cruel command was laid upon her.

"So soon!" said he, with voice of mingled reproach and appeal. Then, as I returned him no answer, he cast himself suddenly upon a couch, and, burying his face in his palms, wailed out,—*"God help the poor dear girl!"*

I stole out of the room through the casement, and entering the garden beheld immediately the fair one whom I was in search of sitting in a bower at the end of the central path. She was clad, of course, in the dull livery of mourning, and appeared harshly out of tune with the surrounding fresh verdure of spring. A gentle breeze was in the air, and the sun was paying court to the earth in a very coquettish fashion. A number of pure white, fantail pigeons were curvetting at the feet of the maiden, while a couple of butterflies engaged in amorous dalliance careered above her head.

The crunch of my tread upon the gravel aroused her from her contemplation. When she beheld me approaching her, she exhibited as much trepidation as she could have shown had I been a recognized footpad, whom she believed was intending to demand her money or her life. I carried in my pocket a letter

which I had received only the previous day from Frank Amor in America, and which missive I intended to read over to the young lady, as I believed it was likely to prove interesting to her. But, on now seeing her start affrighted at my approach, I regretted that I had not elected to perform my scheme of philanthropy by medium of the postman.

"Papa has spoken to you, I suppose," she said to me abruptly, between her gasps for breath.

I had performed recently a very formidable deed on the desolate, surf-beaten shore of Lapland, and afterwards had stood my ground against a grisly bear in the pine-woods fringing the icy lake Onega; yet, strange to say, I was now totally unnerved at the sight of a pretty girl in a state of dire alarm. "Yes," I answered, feeling as foolish as it were well possible; "your father has spoken to me."

Her face became now as marble, and she retreated to the further end of the bower, and gazed out at me with eyes like those of a wounded hart.

I sat down mechanically upon the seat inside the bower, feeling wretchedly uncomfortable. With a strange manner of hesitation I proceeded first to express my regret at my fair

companion's bereavement, and then to make a lackadaisical remark in reference to the favour which the late lady had displayed towards me. Suddenly I perceived that I was speaking in the manner of a boor, and I shut up my foolish mouth as abruptly as I had opened it.

The maiden was, happily for me, quite as confused as I. Instead of calling for the gardeners to come and stone me out of the place—as I fully deserved—she tremblingly put forth her fair hand, and touched me in silent appeal for my forbearance.

"Look here, Miss Ellice!" I uttered, with sudden determination to speak out. I had thought to play with her feelings for a little while; but her piteous look put an end to that notion. "I have not come here to annoy you, but only to say that I do not mean ever to repeat my offer—you know."

"Oh, Mr. Spinner!"

"I have something to show you now," I said, hastily whipping out Amor's letter and laying it before her. "Pray," I proceeded, heaving a great sigh of heart relief, "read it from beginning to end."

My gentle companion became extremely agitated on recognizing the handwriting of the

missive I had submitted to her notice, and she requested me to allow her to take it to her papa. I readily gave my consent to her request; and, indeed, I was very glad to think that I should now be spared the sight of this fair one shedding tears over my rival's effusive epistle.

I waited a long time in the arbour, and, growing impatient, I rose to go in search of my two friends; when, to my great relief, they came to me. The minister and his daughter were now looking bright and cheerful, and even smiled upon me as they advanced. I rejoiced to see them so quickly restored to peace of mind. Mr. Ellice brought me back Amor's letter, and told me he feared he should be violating the laws of confidence to read it, and that he should prefer to be informed on it through me.

Now I was decidedly indisposed to stand further on punctilious ceremony; and without paying any attention to the amiable gentleman's nice scruples, I proceeded then and there to read out the letter in question.

It ran as follows:—

“New York, U.S.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have been here now twelve months, and my mind during that time

has, I believe, undergone a process of purification. Heaven has, we all know, many ways of carrying out its great purposes. Now it is my belief that my strange migration to this distant land was ordained for my reclamation. I must tell you that my communion with my late uncle had excited my mind to speculations which, like the dove flying for the first time abroad from the ark, could find no base whatever to rest upon. I was tortured with a constant longing to return to my original faith, but could not in the gloom find my way back to it. I rejoice to say that at last I have been able to settle my thoughts as they were at the beginning; and I am now convinced, from personal experience, that no man can ever be truly happy unless he be in his religious faith even as a little child.

“You ask me to give you intelligence of your sweetheart. Well; I saw a good deal of her while she was in New York, and I am happy to state that I think she well deserves your ardent attachment. She is now at New Orleans, having been persuaded to go thither by the mother, who, no doubt, favoured the place because of its name. But I dare say you know more of that matter than I.

“Dear friend, my present subject stirs up a

sad feeling within me. Alas! I knew not my own mind when I left England; but now I know that my true love was ever devoted to the sweet white rose of Wandle-side. I have erred, however, far too deeply to hope for forgiveness. Pray let me know of *her*, and also of her father and dear old Miss Magnet, and don't be long about it.

“I have obtained an engagement on the staff of a newly started journal. Our object will be to counteract the rapacity of that money-hunger which is threatening to devour honour, religion, and true happiness throughout the United States.

“With renewed esteem and love,

“I remain yours faithfully,

“FRANK AMOR.”

The minister stood now looking downward, occasionally nodding his head in approbation. The young lady stood by the side of her father, holding his hand, also with eyes downcast, and tracing patterns upon the gravelled path with the ferrule of her parasol.

“Then am I to understand,” inquired the minister, with surprise, when I had read all the letter, “that the theatrical young lady now engages *your* affection?”

"Yes," I answered, feeling myself affected with bashfulness—perhaps for the first time in my life; "that is the case."

"She must certainly possess extraordinary attractions," remarked the rector, thoughtfully. "It may be, after all, that Frank Amor could not well help himself in his extraordinary conduct."

Everything above and around was at this moment favourable to induce charity in the minds of my two companions towards the repentent Frank Amor. The air was full of sunlight, and the thermometer stood at the comfortable gradient of 60° in the shade. The leaves were all bright and fresh, while the interspersed blossoms were simply at their perfection.

After some two or three minutes had elapsed, and neither of my companions seeming inclined to say any important word, I ventured to put to the blushing maiden the question whether she had a message to give me for the young journalist in America.

"Papa?" she said, interrogatively, addressing an appealing look towards her fond parent.

"My dear," returned the good man, gently stroking his daughter's hand, "I leave that entirely to you."

Then she kissed him, holding his face with both her hands.

"Now, go indoors, my dear," he said, affectionately.

The maiden's heart was evidently too full to allow her to speak. She put forth her hand to me, and gave me a smile which was in itself a rich reward for my little act of friendliness. Then she ran along the flower-bordered path with a grace worthy of Flora herself, and disappeared presently into the house.

"I shall write at once to Amor, recalling him home," I remarked to the minister, when his daughter had gone from our sight.

"I suppose you had better do so," replied he, musingly.

No more words were said upon this interesting subject, but it was quite understood by us both that some calf must now be put under a fattening process against the expected happy return of our mutual friend, the prodigal.

I did not proceed again into the Rectory, but went out at the garden gate into the road. I preferred to walk to the railway station, the reverend gentleman accompanying me a considerable part of my way. My companion became quite cheerful under the influence of the bright, dry atmosphere, and presently

gleefully related to me the incidents of the expeditious wooing and winning of Miss White by my old chum, the fat nabob, who was now back in Ceylon with his gentle partner.

"Mrs. White, of Croydon, tells me," said the rector, almost in a whisper, "that our big friend has caught a Tartar in Mary."

"Poor, easy Ned!" I cried, laughing heartily.

The rector joined me with a humorous titter, and displayed himself altogether very pleasantly disposed. I derived much additional amusement from the reflection that my agreeable companion, on first seeing me, had made the solemn statement that he felt convinced that he should not long survive his late beloved spouse. "I married them," he proceeded, with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

"Ah, well, sir," I said, confidently, "you will, I trust, conduct the marriage service once again, ere long." I then shook hands with him, and we parted on excellent terms with each other.

CHAPTER XII.

THE time when I pen these concluding lines is separated by some twelve or thirteen months from the date of my parting with Mr. Ellice upon the Surrey high road, and by twenty-five months at least from the time when I parted with my friend Amor upon the high seas.

During the past year I have crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, and have made Columbia poorer by one of its fairest flowers of womanhood. I shall describe my important doings during the time I have referred to only very briefly. On my outward voyage I passed, all unconsciously, the sobered Ulysses on his way home. On my arrival at New York I pressed on to San Francisco, where I found the treasure I was in search of. In "Frisco city" I was married twice over to my fair charmer—first in a Protestant, and subsequently in a Roman Catholic church. I quite approved of our being twice married, as it somehow suggested to my mind the tie so much favoured by sailors—a knot with a double hitch.

I had learned, some time before I set out upon my matrimonial mission, that the mother had died of yellow fever at New Orleans. It was told me at San Francisco that the poor Frenchwoman had spoken well of me with her last breath, and in gratitude I put up, to her memory, a white marble urn, encircled by a prettily cut wreath of the emblematic lilies of her well-loved France.

I am now writing these valedictory lines in a house standing upon the higher banks of the Thames, a few miles distant from the great metropolis. This residence I have purchased, at the instance of my darling, who selected it because it would be convenient for me in the indulgence of my aquatic inclinations. Women cannot understand man's strong proclivities, and their planning is always meant to meet only mild views, yet they doubtless make life very pleasant with their dainty ways.

I have lately received a letter from Ned Amor, in Ceylon, in which the easy-tempered fellow tells me that, albeit he has introduced a tyrant over his lares and penates, he considers his new state of subjection to be, on the whole, decidedly favourable to his present enjoyment and future well-being. He communicates the good tidings that he has been blessed with a

boy baby, and that his better half has already announced her intention of undertaking alone the duty of bringing up their child in the way he should go.

Captain Melrose, though still leavened with the old Adam, has contrived during the past year to live a more cleanly and respectable life than he has ever done before. I have commissioned him to proceed to the Indian province of Bahar, where I possess some property inherited from my father, and I am hopeful that he will prove worthy my trust.

Miss Magnet is still in good possession of her faculties, and able to move about. My wife and I are engaged to call at her house on a particular morning of next week, to take her on to Wandle Parsonage. A solemn ceremony will then be performed in the rector's church. This ceremony will unite Frank Amor and Emily Ellice as man and wife, until death do them part.

THE END.







